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Scandinavia

Sweden, Norway & Denmark

Henrik Berezin

VISIT…

Adventure Guide

Scandinavia

Henrik Berezin

HUNTER

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Dedication

I want to thank all the people who in one way or another have been involved, helping me with providing useful tips and information.

Special thanks to my father who spent countless hours proof-reading every page of the book.

Introduction

"To travel is to live." H.C. Andersen, My Life's Adventures*, 1855*

The purpose of this book, as with all of Hunter's Adventure Guides, is for the reader to truly experience the destination, not just see it. This is what makes these guides different from others. We focus more on the activities, the attractions and how to make the most of your stay through a wide variety of adventures.

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An adventure, however, does not necessarily mean something that gets your adrenaline flowing; it could be anything from sightseeing to visiting a museum or going shopping. It can also mean something more physically demanding such as hiking, biking, climbing or skiing. That all depends on who you are and what you're in the mood for. At a minimum, this book should give you some good leads.

To cover all of Scandinavia in one book may be possible but I have chosen to concentrate on areas that will offer the most to visitors in the three countries. You'll find a mix of urban and rural areas and of adventures for all seasons.

It should provide some unusual options that you normally wouldn't find in other guidebooks.

■ What is Scandinavia?

The word Scandinavia probably derives from two ancient words meaning danger and island. Today, Scandinavia is nei-

ther regarded as dangerous nor an island. So how do we now define it?

The *Oxford Dictionary* describes Scandinavia as: "Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Iceland."

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines it as: "comprising Norway, Sweden and Denmark," but adds that it is sometimes used more broadly to include Finland and Iceland. It also points out that Denmark technically is not part of the North European Plain and the Scandinavian Peninsula.

Webster's Online Dictionary defines it as: 1. The peninsula in northern Europe occupied by Norway and Sweden. 2. A group of culturally related countries in northern Europe; Finland and Iceland are sometimes considered Scandinavian.

Geographically speaking, the Scandinavian Peninsula consists of Norway, Sweden and a section of northern Finland. Considering the similarities and ties between the first two countries in history, language, culture, environment and political system, they should both be included. Denmark is technically not part of the peninsula but is nevertheless close to both Norway and Sweden, geographically as well as historically, and can therefore not be omitted.

Finland has the geographical link but their language is completely unrelated. Iceland has many links to Sweden, Norway and Denmark, mostly because of the Vikings, and Icelandic is also in the same language group (North-Germanic) as Swedish, Norwegian and Danish. On the other hand, geographically, Iceland is remote.

So Sweden, Norway and Denmark will be the focus of this guide. The *History* section that follows will explore the strong ties connecting the three countries, starting with the legendary Viking Age.

■ History

The first inhabitants of Scandinavia are believed to have been tribes settling in the southern regions, currently Denmark and southern Sweden, more than 10,000 years ago. They lived off hunting, fishing and most likely farming.

Sweden and Denmark were probably named for the prehistoric Svear and Daner people, while Norway, which simply means "the way to the north," was named for its location.

Today, the Scandinavian countries get along fairly well with each other, but it wasn't always that way. Throughout history there have been numerous wars fought and alliances formed, separating and uniting areas of this region.

The three countries have each had their respective eras of greatness, though none of the empires was able to remain powerful. The more each country expanded, the harder it was to defend.

The Viking Age (800–1050)

Before the Viking Age began around 800 AD there was a time of great migration in Europe and many found their way up to Scandinavia. The people who moved here between 400 and 800 AD developed great skills as craftsmen, traders and sailors. Gradually, they became known as Vikings.

The Vikings generally lived near the sea around bays and fjords on the coastline and the word Viking probably means "from the bay" as "vik" was (and still is) the word for bay in the Scandinavian languages.

The Vikings are much better known worldwide than, for example, the Scandinavians of the Middle Ages even though that era lasted longer, was more recent and is probably of greater significance in Scandinavian history. The fascination with the Vikings probably derives from the myths and stories surrounding them, as well as their dramatic and violent history.

Myth: In contemporary art as well as in movies, the Viking helmet is often shown with horns. The real Viking helmets, however, did not have them.

When the Viking Age began, there were no kingdoms in Scandinavia. Although borders separated the countries, there wasn't much difference between the languages spoken and there was not a distinct political separation between them.

The real leaders were chiefs who ruled over the areas they conquered. These areas would often shift in size and chiefs would be replaced quite frequently during these violent times as battles and fighting was part of everyday life. Most fights were man-to-man and usually didn't end until one of them died. The Vikings were also proud people and they lived by the "eye for an eye rule," meaning relatives of someone who died in a fight would often kill the winner of the fight.

There was a more tranquil side to Vikings as well. They were known to have a great sense of humor and storytelling was an important part of their lives. A great storyteller was highly respected by his peers.

Most Vikings were illiterate and the ones who could write didn't have much to write on. Probably the most common media for writing in those days were leather and wooden sticks. Unfortunately these materials were not resilient enough to last through centuries. The evidence that has lasted is on rune stones, which can still be found in several places in Scandinavia.

There are countless theories about these "pirates of Scandinavia." One of the more common misconceptions today is that all Vikings were ruthless barbaric sailors who pillaged and plundered everything in sight. The truth is that only a small number of Vikings actually went on these famous crusades. The majority were farmers, craftsmen, traders and diplomats. Even a lot of the sailors were peaceful discoverers simply exploring new areas and making new contacts for trading. They were skilled sailors and built boats that could travel long distances at high speeds.

There were also the Vikings that set out to pillage and plunder. They used the successful routes of their colleagues to find their prey.

The Vikings went all over Europe and beyond. The Norwegians were the most ambitious sailors and went to Iceland, Greenland, Ireland, Northern England and Scotland. They

were probably the first Europeans to discover America, several centuries before Columbus.

The Swedes went to Russia, Turkey and other parts of Eastern Europe as far down as the Caspian Sea. The city of Constantinople in Turkey, present-day Istanbul, was known to the Vikings as Miklagård and became an important trading point for the Vikings.

The Danes went to Southern England, France and Germany. Some even went as far down as the Mediterranean Sea.

At the time of the Viking Age, there were no large empires in Europe and most countries were small kingdoms trying to become bigger and more powerful. This often led to wars and chaos, which made most of Europe an easy target for the Viking crusades.

The Vikings were also trained to fight from an early age and it was considered better to die in battle than at home. The boats, perhaps the biggest reason for their success, were built from oak and could take a crew of up to 200. With the wind at their back, the ship could travel as fast as 15 knots (17 mph) and, if there was no wind, the large crews could still reach high speeds by rowing.

The End of the Viking Age, 950-1050

In the early part of the ninth century, a French monk named Ansgar would make his way up to Scandinavia. Most of Europe was now Christian but the Vikings were stubborn people and not easily persuaded. They firmly believed in their gods, known as *Asar*. But where Christian missionaries in the past had failed, many of them killed before they were even given a chance, Ansgar would succeed. He is widely known as the man who brought Christianity to Scandinavia, although it would take many years until it was officially accepted. One of the reasons the Vikings started to convert was because many countries in Christian Europe forbade their people to trade with non-Christians. As more and more Scandinavians converted, the believers in *Asgård* (the realm where the gods lived) would become a minority and felt left out. Eventually, with help from the Scandinavian kings, they would all follow.

The Christian faith brought many changes. All new-born babies would be baptized, marriages would be arranged by the church and the dead had to be buried in the ground, rather than cremated as the Vikings did.

It's difficult to determine exactly when kings started gaining power in Scandinavia. We know that they existed even in the early days of the Viking Age but, since the Vikings had chiefs ruling over their respective areas, the kings didn't have much influence in the beginning. In order to take control of their countries, the kings realized that they needed help.

Denmark is one of the oldest monarchies in the world and the country with the longest list of uninterrupted monarchs. The present royal family can be traced all the way back to **Gorm the Old**, who lived in the mid-10th century. Gorm had his residence in Jutland (western Denmark) and probably didn't have much power or influence in the other parts of the country. **Harald Bluetooth**, who was the son of Gorm the Old, was the first Scandinavian king to bring Christianity north of the Danish-German border. It would take another couple of decades before Sweden and Norway followed. The runic stone shown above was ordered carved and erected by Harald about 980 and shows the oldest Nordic picture of Christ. It weighs about 10 tons.

In Norway, **Harald Hairfair** is known as the king who united the country at the end of the ninth century, though he probably only controlled the southwestern part of Norway, i.e., the county of Rogaland. When King Hairfair died around the year 930 the country was split yet again. **Olav Tryggvason**, a Viking, who had spent a great deal of time in England, where he converted to Christianity, became the first Christian Nor-

wegian king in 995. He was determined to establish his new faith in Norway and, by doing so, restore order and rule all of Norway as a united country. Olav fought many battles for his cause and was eventually killed in the year 1000. But he had established a foundation for the next Norwegian king, **Olav II Haraldsson**. Haraldsson also paid for his attempts with his life when he was killed in one of the most famous battles in Norway's history, the **Battle of Stiklestad** in 1030. Shortly after his death, Olav II became canonized and the Christian faith was from this time forward never threatened in Norway.

Olav II

In **Sweden**, **Erik Segersäll** is recognized as the first king and his son, **Olof Skötkonung**, is often regarded as the first Christian king of Sweden. Olof reigned around the year 1000 and, like his colleague in Norway, accepted the new faith in order to strengthen his position as king.

Knut the Great

Meanwhile in **Denmark**, **Sven Forkbeard**, who became king after Harald Bluetooth, was a powerful ruler and invaded England successfully in 1013. The Danish Vikings had controlled Southern England for much of the Viking Age but stepped back during the 10th century in exchange for ransom. But Forkbeard, who had taken over Norway when Olav Tryggvason was killed in the year 1000, had wanted England back and was for a brief period the ruler of a vast empire consisting of Denmark, England and Norway. Sven's son Knut strengthened Denmark's position in England and became known as **Knut the Great**. Soon after Knut died, the Danish empire started to subside and they lost control over

both England and Norway. The Norwegian king, **Harald Hårdråde**, made an attempt to restore the Scandinavian regime in England but was defeated in the famous battle of Hastings, where he was killed. This event in 1066 is often recognized as the official end of the Viking Age and the start of the Middle Ages.

Norway Grows Stronger (1240–1319)

A couple of centuries into the new millennium, Norway became a force to be reckoned with. The Viking Age had been a prosperous era; the Norwegians had been ambitious explorers and conquerors, colonizing Iceland, Greenland, Northern England and Ireland (Dublin was in fact founded by the Norwegian Vikings). Except for the turbulent period in the early 11th century with religious battles and interferences by the Danish kings, Norway continued to flourish even after the Viking Age ended. By the mid-13th century, the economy was good and there was a well established monarchy.

Bergen was now the capital and biggest city of Norway and the busiest trading port in Scandinavia for the **Hanseatic League**. The league was an alliance of German cities whose members dominated trading on the Baltic Sea and the North Sea throughout most of the Middle Ages. Their base was Lübeck in Germany but Bergen, with its prime location and big harbor, became one of their main ports in the 13th century.

Unfortunately for Bergen and Norway, some of the ships arriving in the harbor contained more than just merchandise. The disease known as the **Black Death** (the Plague) killed nearly 70% of Bergen's population in the 14th century and was one of the main reasons for Norway's downfall.

In 1299, the Norwegian king, **Haakon V**, decided to move to **Oslo**, which consequently became the new capital. Haakon was a productive king who, among other things, built the **Akershus Castle** in his new home town, a castle that still stands today. Norway was strong under Haakon. In addition to Norway, he also had Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands as parts of his kingdom.

When Haakon died in 1319, however, he had no male offspring to extend the long uninterrupted line of Norwegian monarchs. He did have a daughter, however, who had given birth to a son, **Magnus Eriksson**, and he was the intended successor to the throne.

Magnus Eriksson

The only problem was that Eriksson was also nephew to the Swedish king and had become the natural successor to the Swedish throne as well when the king had been forced to leave the country in exile after killing his two brothers, one of them being Magnus Eriksson's father.

Magnus Eriksson, still a child, was now left as the sole heir to the throne of Sweden and Norway (although councilors in each country ruled for the first 13 years until he became of legal age) and both countries agreed that the king should spend equal time in the two kingdoms. Eriksson, however, clearly prioritized Sweden, where he spent a lot more time, ignoring the agreement made by the councilors before he became king. The loss of its royal dynasty, in combination with the Plague in Bergen which quickly spread to other parts of the country, resulted in a slump which would persist for many centuries in Norway.

When Magnus Eriksson became king, he was already the ruler of the biggest empire in Europe at the time. Denmark's power had steadily decreased since the early 13th century when the Danish king had split the country in three pieces so that each of his three sons could have their own region. This weakened Denmark, which had no choice but to hand over the southern provinces on the Scandinavian Peninsula (present Sweden) when Eriksson demanded them.

Magnus Eriksson himself also split his kingdom by designating his youngest son Håkon as ruler of Norway, while his eldest, Erik, was given charge of Sweden. Although Norway now had its own king, his sovereignty wouldn't last long.

Denmark Dominates

(Mid-14th Century to Mid-17th Century)

In 1340, a man who became known as **Valdemar Atterdag** became the new king of Denmark. When he was crowned, Atterdag only controlled the northern part of Jutland but he was firmly committed to restoring order in Denmark. He would regain control of the kingdom by working his way east and proceeded to retain the provinces his predecessors had handed over to Magnus Eriksson. Atterdag forcefully conquered territories one at a time and started to become a big threat to the Hanseatic League since he seized control over a large area around the Baltic Sea. The Germans would now help Sweden and Norway to put an end to Atterdag's sudden dominance.

THE POWER OF THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE

In battles between the Scandinavian countries, the weaker nation would often get the support of the Hanseatic League. This tactic by the Germans was enforced to ensure that a Scandinavian country never gained so much power that it would become too dominant and have full control of trading in the Baltic region.

Even with the help of the Germans, Eriksson's position as king had weakened so much that the Swedish nobles went to Germany to ask for a replacement. **Albrekt of Mecklenburg** was not only a German, he was also the nephew of Magnus Eriksson and thus, cousin of King Håkon in Norway. Most Swedes happily accepted their new king, particularly in Stockholm, which already had a considerable German population at the time.

But Albrekt of Mecklenburg neglected his duties as the new king of Sweden and lost popularity. The Swedes now turned to Denmark for help in removing him. The Hanseatic League was indeed powerful and getting rid of Albrekt would only be the first small step toward diminishing the German influence in Scandinavia. The only way the Germans could be defeated

was if the Scandinavian countries agreed not to fight each other, at least for a while, and formed an alliance against the Hanseatic League. This is what prompted the idea of the Kalmar Union.

The Kalmar Union

King Håkon of Norway ended up marrying Valdemar Atterdag's daughter, Margarethe, and Norway and Denmark would once again form an alliance. When Atterdag died in 1375 Margarethe was the only one of his six children who survived him. Her husband, King Håkon, died a few years later and their son, Olav, who had become the king of Denmark at age five when his grandfather died (with Margarethe as legal guardian), also passed away unexpectedly at age 17. So now the stage was set for **Margarethe** who, after all these incidents, seemed destined to become queen.

In return for the Swedish plea for help, she defeated Albrekt of Mecklenburg, which made her the ruler of all the Scandinavian countries, since Sweden was now without a king and Denmark had already formed a union with Norway a few years earlier.

The Kalmar Union, which became the official name for the three countries coming together, was officially formed in the city of Kalmar on the Swedish east coast in 1397. In order to ensure the future of the union, Margarethe had brought her sister's grandson, Erik, up from Pomerania to crown him in Kalmar as the official king of the union. While **Erik of Pomerania** was the new king, Margarethe remained fully in control of the three countries until her death in 1412.

It wasn't always a smooth ride for the leaders of the Kalmar Union – not surprisingly considering that the three countries, which had been bitter enemies for many years, suddenly were trying to cooperate. Sweden in particular became unhappy with the politics of Erik of Pomerania after Margarethe died. The rebellious Swedish statesman Engelbrekt led an uprising in 1434, which was the beginning of the end for the threesome. Erik's power declined and Sweden managed to pull out of the union shortly afterward.

Over the next century, the Danish union-kings were recognized as kings even of Sweden from time to time, but the

Swedes had made it clear that they didn't want their neighbors' involvement anymore.

At the end of the 15th and beginning of the 16th century, Sweden didn't appoint any kings, only regents. Even though their country was officially still in the union, the regents were the rulers in Sweden, not the Danish kings. One of the most important events for the Swedish opposition was the **Battle of Brunkeberg** (Stockholm) in 1471, when the Danish king, Christian I, was defeated by the Swedish regent, Sten Sture, and his troops.

Gustav Vasa

The Danish rulers didn't have much success for the next couple of decades until a king named **Christian II** came along and was determined to make some changes. Christian marched into the Swedish capital of Stockholm and took over power in an event which became known as the **Stockholm Bloodbath**. **Gustav Vasa**, a nobleman who had been imprisoned in Denmark for his insubordinate behavior, began a rebellion against the Danes, which would lead to Sweden's independence in 1523. Since that year, Sweden has never again been occupied by another country. (Read more about the bloodbath and the Vasa rebellion in the chapter about Stockholm, page 167). Sweden was now officially out of the union while Norway and Denmark would continue their alliance for several more centuries.

The Reformations (1527 and 1536)

When King Frederik I, who had succeeded Christian II, died in 1533, Denmark had divided opinions about who the next king should be. Denmark still elected their kings, which meant that the oldest son would not necessarily take over. Frederik's oldest son, Christian, was a Lutheran, which worried many Danes and the priests in particular, who would rather see his younger brother Hans take over. Hans was still

a child and could presumably be persuaded to follow the Catholic faith. There were even those who wanted to see the former king, Christian II, who had been imprisoned after a few years in exile, back on the throne. At last, Christian (the Lutheran) was crowned the new king and became **Christian III**. This would bring along a lot of changes.

King Gustav Vasa introduced the Lutheran faith to Sweden through his reformation in 1527 and Christian III accordingly carried out a reformation of his own in 1536. Norway had virtually lost its independence with the Kalmar Union but they still had a council of the realm until the reformation. After 1536, however, Norway was nothing more than a province of Denmark, which was still, despite Vasa's success in Sweden, the most powerful Scandinavian country.

A war between Sweden and Denmark broke out in 1563 when Denmark tried to gain control over Sweden, while Sweden wanted the southern provinces on the peninsula back. The war lasted for seven years with no real winner in the end since the borders of both countries remained the same as before the war.

THE ÖRESUND TOLL

In 1429, during the Kalmar Union, Erik of Pomerania had introduced a duty for ships passing through the Sound (Öresund), which became known as the Öresund Toll. The Hanseatic League wasn't exactly thrilled about this idea and neither were the Swedes, who needed to go through the Danish kingdom to get to and from the Baltic Sea. The Öresund Toll was one of the reasons why Sweden rebelled against Erik of Pomerania and eventually got out of the Kalmar Union. In the 1570s, Kronborg Castle was built in Helsingør to strengthen the defense of the toll which was also increased around the same time by Denmark's King Frederik II. The Öresund Toll wasn't wiped out completely until 1857 and for many years there were wars and disputes as direct results of this toll. They would eventually lead to the fall of the Danish empire and start a new era with Sweden as the leading Scandinavian nation.

Sweden's Rise & Fall

(Early 1600s–1718)

Gustav II Adolf

Sweden's era of greatness started with **King Gustav II Adolf**, although he got off to a rocky start with yet another attempt by the Danes to take control over Sweden. Sweden had not been at war with Denmark since 1570 when the seven-year war ended, but the Danes declared war on them in 1611 at a time when Sweden already had their hands full, fighting both Russia and Poland. With three opponents simultaneously and a young and inexperienced king (Gustav II Adolf was only 17 years old when he was crowned in 1611), Sweden had a tough time defending itself against Denmark. In the peace treaty that followed in 1613, Sweden had to pay a considerable amount for damages and gave up Älvsborg Castle in Gothenburg as ransom (more about this in the chapter about Gothenburg, page 68).

Despite the hefty ransom, Sweden didn't lose any land to Denmark and even got full exemption from the Öresund Toll. After making peace with Denmark they could also focus more on the battles against Russia and Poland, which went really well. King Gustav was now well on his way to establishing a new empire by winning most of his battles in the east. That gave him more power and influence in Scandinavia as well as in other parts of Europe.

In 1618, the **Thirty-Year War** between Catholics and Protestants started in Germany. The Swedish troops did not engage until 1630 but when they did, they were successful, led by Gustav II Adolf, who had gained plenty of experience on the battlefield since 1611. The Swedish king eventually died during a battle in 1632 but the war was a success in the end for the Protestants and for Sweden, whose military remained strong even after the king's death.

In 1643, Sweden declared war on Denmark which they could now attack from two sides, since they still had troops in Germany. The main incentive was the Öresund Toll, which had become only a partial exemption for Sweden since Denmark claimed it was Sweden proper that was exempt and not its newly won provinces east of the Baltic Sea. Another reason why Sweden attacked Denmark was to gain some, if possible all, of the coastal provinces on the Scandinavian Peninsula, which would make trading in this region even more convenient.

MEDIEVAL TRANSPORTATION

These days, it may seem strange that Denmark and Sweden could be divided the way they were in the Middle Ages. The southern provinces of present Sweden (Scania, Halland, and Blekinge) belonged to Denmark for the better part of the first six centuries from the end of the Viking Age around 1050.

Geographically, this may seem odd today as the three provinces are part of the Scandinavian Peninsula where Sweden is located, separated from Denmark by the Öresund Sound and the Kattegat Sea. Historically speaking, however, oceans have united people while forests have separated them. But this was reversed with the introduction of trains, cars and airplanes. Before that, crossing the Öresund Sound was child's play compared to crossing the deep forests of Småland in southern Sweden, which made up the border between the two countries before 1658.

Sweden had formed an alliance with France against Germany in the still ongoing Thirty-Year War, but France had no interest in helping the Swedes against Denmark. Instead, Sweden turned to the Dutch, who were more willing to help out in order to create some stability in the Danish-dominated Öresund and Baltic regions. The strong Swedish and Dutch navies defeated the Danes. That eventually led to the Peace Treaty of Brömsebro in 1645, by the terms of which Denmark

granted Sweden full exemption from duty and also handed over the province of Halland for 30 years as a pledge.

After the peace treaty in Brömsebro, Sweden strengthened its position as the most powerful of the Scandinavian nations. Denmark declared war on Sweden in 1657 in an effort to redeem itself and to reclaim Halland. Instead, the Swedish troops yet again surprised the Danes by sneaking in from behind, this time in the middle of winter, on the frozen water of the Great Belt between the islands of Funen and Sealand. This time, a peace treaty was signed giving Sweden the four provinces of Bohuslän, Scania, Blekinge and Halland (permanently), as well as the Norwegian province of Trøndelag and the island of Bornholm. The latter two would be returned after a Danish victory in Copenhagen two years later, when the Swedish king underestimated the strong defense of the Danish capital and, despite help from the Dutch navy, was defeated.

Even with the loss of Trøndelag and Bornholm, Sweden had a vast empire, which included all of present Sweden, Finland (which had belonged to Sweden since the 14th century), the Baltic Countries and some scattered provinces in northern Germany.

The empire continued to grow for the next several decades. When **King Karl XII** took over in 1699 at age 17, the era known as the Great Nordic Wars started. Karl would spend almost his entire adult life abroad attempting to increase his land and power even further, which he did successfully for many years. But the Swedish king had many enemies, particularly his neighbor to the west, Denmark-Norway, but also Russia to the east, which created a predicament for the Swedish ruler. Karl XII was ultimately killed in a battle in Norway in 1718; after that, it wasn't long before Sweden's era of greatness ended.

The Sweden-Norway Union

(1814–1905)

At the end of the 18th century, Russia and England were the two dominant countries in Europe, but the French emperor Napoleon started making great strides.

Sweden lost Finland to Russia in 1809 and the Swedish king at the time was overthrown as a result of that loss. A new king took over but, since he was already in his 60s and didn't have any children, a new crown prince had to be chosen from outside the family.

What Sweden needed was a strong charismatic leader and they turned to Napoleon for help. One of Napoleon's men, a general named **Jean Baptiste Bernadotte**, right, happily accepted and in 1810 became the new leader and crown prince of Sweden, changing his name to the more appropriate **Karl Johan**.

For the latter part of the Napoleonic War (1804-1815), Denmark had been on the French side, while Karl Johan had turned against his old boss and supported the alliance in the war. After a successful battle for the allies against Napoleon in Germany in 1813, Karl Johan could take advantage of being on the winning side and started a war against Denmark later that year. Although the Swedish support in the war had been nominal, Karl Johan had the support of the Russians since Sweden promised to give up any thoughts of recapturing Finland if Russia helped Sweden against Denmark.

Norway had wanted to break free from Danish rule for quite some time and welcomed the break-up; however, Sweden was not willing to accept Norwegian sovereignty. Instead, a union between Sweden and Norway was established in 1814. The situation for Norway improved and they were allowed to establish their own constitution, government and army. They didn't, however, get their own ministry of foreign affairs, nor would they have their own king.

Eventually Norway got tired of having to obey a Swedish king and in June of 1905, the Norwegian Parliament staged a coup and declared the union to be dissolved. The union king, Oskar II, wasn't happy about this but there was little he could do to silence the fierce opposition in Norway, which in the end led to a referendum on August 13 that same year. The result:

368,208 votes against 184 to become independent from Sweden. Oskar II abdicated the Norwegian throne shortly afterward.

Since Norway needed a new king and didn't have a royal family, it turned to Denmark for help. A prince by the name of Carl accepted the position as king of Norway and changed his name to **Haakon VII**.

Since 1905, the three Scandinavian countries have had no serious disputes – so far.

■ Population

Sweden

Sweden has a population of about nine million people with a population density of 19 people per square km. Most of them live in urban areas. Stockholm is the capital and biggest city with 750,000 residents, Gothenburg is second with 470,000 people and Malmö, the third-biggest, has about 270,000. Only 10% of Sweden's population lives in the northern half of the country; 50% live in Greater Stockholm, Greater Gothenburg and Scania (the southernmost province where Malmö is located).

Norway

Norway has a population of just over 4½ million people and has one of the lowest population densities in Europe with 12 people per square km. Three out of four Norwegians live near the coast, which is also where you will find most of the bigger cities in Norway. Nearly 80% of the population lives in urban areas.

Oslo, the capital and biggest city, has more than 500,000 inhabitants and the Oslofjord area is home to nearly one third of the nation's population if you count all the summer residents. Bergen is the second-biggest city in Norway with 230,000 people. Trondheim comes in third with 140,000.

Sami

The Sami are the indigenous people of Sweden and Norway. They lived in Scandinavia 2,000 years ago and probably even much earlier. In those days, like most people, they supported themselves by hunting and fishing. Sometime around the 16th and 17th centuries, the Sami became nomadic, moving from place to place with their reindeer herds, which were of vital importance to them. The reindeer is still a important animal in the Sami culture but today only about 20% of the Sami make their living from the reindeer.

There are about 50,000-80,000 Sami living in a large area from the county of Finnmark in the north of Norway to Dalarna in Sweden and Hedmark in Norway. Parts of Finland and Russia are also inhabited by the Sami. Their land is not an autonomous region but they do have their own government, Sametinget, which is subordinate to the countries' state administrations.

The Sami territory

Sapmi is the Sami word for their people as well as for their land and language. There are many different types of Sami cultures, varying from region to region in this vast area. The language, which has numerous dialects, is related to Finnish and different from the Scandinavian languages.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SAMI CULTURE

- Living close to nature and taking advantage of what it has to offer without abusing it.
- Their colorful clothes and stylish hats.
- Reindeers – their domesticated animal.
- Their songs – the "jojk" is a monotonous combination of song and poem that expresses their feelings for nature.
- Their huts (tents) – reminiscent of American Indian tipis.
- The official website of the Sami is www.sapmi.com.

Denmark

Denmark is the most densely populated country in northern Europe with 100 people per square km. The total number of people living in Denmark is 5½ million. About 1.7 million live in the Greater Copenhagen area, which is 30% of the total population. The city of Copenhagen is home to 800,000 people. The second-biggest city is Århus with 275,000 people, making it the unofficial capital of Jutland and western Denmark. Odense, on the island of Funen, is third with 190,000.

■ Religion

The vast majority of the Scandinavian people are Protestant Christian (Lutheran), but there is complete freedom of religion in all Scandinavian countries. Generally speaking, Scandinavians don't go to church on a regular basis, only on special occasions such as weddings and funerals. Although Scandinavians today are probably some of the most secular people in the world, religion has played a significant role in shaping the societies and peoples here.

When the Viking Age ended and kings started convincing people to convert to the Christian faith, there were many religious battles. The Reformation took place in the early 16th century, abolishing the Catholic faith and introducing the Lutheran religion, which created enormous turbulence.

■ Language

History

For many centuries, the people of Scandinavia spoke the same language. Before the Viking Age, the language was quite complicated but would emerge into a somewhat simpler form known as Old Norse sometime during the ninth century. As Vikings occupied large parts of England and Scotland, Old Norse would strongly influence the English language and many of the most common English words come from the Vikings. Husband (*husbonde*) and window (*vindue*) are two examples.

Old Norse would then evolve into the different Scandinavian languages. At first, they were only different dialects of the same language but they slowly developed into the three lan-

guages that exist today. With the introduction of Protestantism during the Middle Ages, as well as the frequent visits by Hanseatic merchants, the German language exerted a strong influence.

Today

The main languages spoken in Scandinavia are Swedish, Norwegian and Danish.

Norwegian is divided into two branches, known as Bokmål and Nynorsk. Bokmål is the most common form, used by the vast majority in everyday life, but Nynorsk is still taught in schools. The literacy rate in Scandinavia is 99%.

The Scandinavian languages are all part of the North-Germanic family, which also includes Icelandic. People from the three Scandinavian countries can understand each other more or less, but Icelandic, despite being North-Germanic, is quite different.

English is taught in school as a second language from early ages and a foreign tourist can get by with English virtually everywhere, especially in and around the bigger cities.

The indigenous Sami people, in the northern parts of Sweden, Norway and Finland, speak their own language. It is related to Finnish, which has no connections to the North-Germanic languages.

Today, if we were to put the three Scandinavian languages on a scale, Swedish and Danish should be on one end with Norwegian in the middle.

Norwegian (Bokmål) has more words in common with Danish but the pronunciation is closer to Swedish. In other words, a Norwegian and a Swede will recognize the sounds of the words when they speak to each other but won't always understand what the words mean. A Dane and Norwegian, on the other hand, will know most words spoken to each other if they could see them in writing, but will have more difficulty understanding their pronunciation. Swedes and Danes generally have the hardest time communicating with each other, though people in eastern Denmark and southern Sweden communicate quite well as they are used to having visitors from each other's countries.

■ Culinary Traditions

Basically, food and drink traditions in Scandinavia can vary quite a lot, not just from one country to another but from one region to another within each country.

Food

Sweden

Swedish meatballs are world-famous, although they don't look or taste the same if you order them abroad. Smörgåsbord, i.e., buffet, is a Swedish word commonly used in the English language as well (smorgasbord). The word comes from the two terms, *smörgås* (sandwich) and *bord* (table). A typical Swedish smörgåsbord consists of many different types of food such as beans, cabbage, potatoes, herring, raw spiced salmon (gravlax), as well as other types of fish, meatballs and much more.

These buffets can be served at any time but always occur on holidays such as Christmas and Midsummer and often at parties, when lots of people need to be fed.

Norway

Fish is commonly found on dining tables all over Scandinavia, especially along the coastal areas. In Norway, since 75% of the population lives on or near the coast, many Norwegians eat fish on an almost daily basis.

There are over 200 kinds of fish in Norway. Although all are edible, only a few are popular and actually eaten by the general population. This has to do with tradition. Cod and salmon are two of the most common and appreciated fish in Norway. A lot of cod is made into *Lutefisk*, which is dried cod soaked in lye (*lut*) until it becomes almost gelatinous. To some, this might not seem tasty but it's popular in Norway and if you dine here, you have to try it at least once.

Denmark

Smørrebrød is a typical Danish food. It is made from a slice of rye bread with, for example, meat such as roast beef or ham, along with lettuce and pickles. Other types of Smørrebrød can include egg, cheese, herring or shrimp topped off with a rich layer of mayonnaise.

Fish is also popular in Denmark and plaice with remoulade sauce is a typical dish that you have to try. Smoked herring is a specialty on the island of Bornholm.

Bøf is the Danish word for beefsteak and you will see some restaurants called *Bøf Hus* (steak house).

Drinks

Scandinavians drink a lot of beer and the Danes may well be the champion beer drinkers in the world. Denmark is the home of Carlsberg, one of the biggest breweries anywhere.

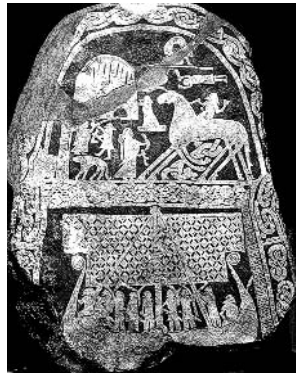
Denmark is also home to aquavit/schnapps, which is traditionally consumed in Sweden and Norway as well. Sweden is the home to Absolut Vodka.

People in all of Scandinavia drink a lot of coffee, which is generally much stronger than what visitors from abroad are used to.

■ Myths & Legends

During the Viking Age, everyone in Scandinavia had the same religion. They believed in the Viking gods (*Asar*). Unlike gods of many other religions, these were not immortal. They were much like humans, only more powerful. In those times, believing that the world was round would be laughed at as much as a person ordering a non-alcoholic beer in a bar in Scandinavia today. As far as the Vikings were concerned, the universe consisted of a giant tree called *Ygdrasil*, meaning "horse of terror." On the branches of this mighty tree there were three different worlds: *Asgård*, where the gods lived, *Midgård*, where humans lived, and *Utgård*, where giants, elves and dwarfs lived. Then there was *Hel*, where the less fortunate Vikings ended up.

Asgård



Oden approaching Valhalla

Oden (Odin) was the oldest and wisest of the Gods. He knew everything that went on in Midgård and could even see into the future. The mighty Oden knew that one day the Giants would invade Asgård and that would be the end of the world. This event was known as *Ragnarök*.

Thor, the God of Thunder, was the strongest and most popular God among the Vikings. He would throw his hammer, *Mjölner*, to kill enemies such as the Giants and, like a boomerang, it would return to his hand every time he threw it.

Oden also chose which Vikings would join him and the other Gods in Asgård in the afterlife. Getting to Asgård was every Viking's dream. It was a place where they could fight every day and party all night, drinking mead (a type of beer) and eating endless amounts of pork. The pork came from the giant pig *Särimner*, who was slaughtered every night but always woke up the following morning fresh as a daisy.

Only the bravest warriors who died in battle stood a chance of being chosen for this paradise. Naturally, it was part of the Viking religion to fight and to die with honor.

Despite the introduction of the Christian faith in Scandinavia some 1,000 years ago, the Viking Gods still linger in Scandinavia today, at least three days a week. Wednesday (*Onsdag*) is named after Oden, Thursday (*Torsdag*) after Thor and Friday (*Fredag*) after Frej, who was the God of fertility.

Hel

If you died from old age, disease or falling off your roof when fixing a leak, you did not die "with honor" and would be sent to Hel (Hell). In this dismal place people would be punished for not dying properly. To get to Hel, one had to cross the river Slid, which was filled with knives and swords. When crossing this river you died a second time before arriving at the chamber of torture where you would spend the rest of eternity.

Midgård

This world where humans lived was actually made up of Ymer the Giant's body parts. At the creation of the world, Oden had killed Ymer to use his body as the ground for humans to walk on. His blood became the sea, his skull became the sky and even his eyebrows formed a wall to protect people from their enemies.

A giant snake in the ocean surrounding Midgård formed a circle by biting its tail. When the snake lost its grip, *Ragnarök* (the end of the world) was coming.

■ Climate

Since Scandinavia is a large area, the climate can vary widely from one region to another. In the chapters that follow there are more specifics about the climate in that particular region.

In Denmark the climate is virtually the same as in southern Sweden with fairly warm summers and mild winters. Average high temperatures in the summer are around 20°C (68°F) and in the winter around 0°C (32°F). Most precipitation falls in September, October and November. The winter months see little snow and it is windy along the coasts. The coastal regions have less variation in temperatures between summer and winter than inland regions.

In the central parts of Scandinavia, the summer temperatures are virtually the same as in the south but the winters are a bit colder. The climate on the west coast of Norway differs greatly from the rest of the country. Because of the Gulf Stream, the winters are milder and the summers are cooler. It also rains considerably more, especially from September to December. Bergen, for example, gets more than three times as much precipitation as Oslo.

Even in the north, at least along the Baltic coast in Sweden, summer temperatures are similar to those in the rest of Scandinavia. The winters up north, however, can be brutally cold, with lots of snow, especially in the mountainous regions. The coast of northern Norway has a much milder climate and the ports here are ice-free all year-round, as opposed to the ports of the Baltic Sea in northern Sweden.

THE MIDNIGHT SUN

The phenomenon known as the midnight sun occurs when the sun doesn't fall below the horizon before it starts to rise again. If you decide to visit Scandinavia in the summer, don't miss the opportunity to go north and experience the midnight sun and the longest days of your life (because of the midnight sun, not because you're bored). In the far north it can be seen from the end of May until the end of July. The best spots to view it are from elevated positions with no obstacles blocking the horizon. Although you need to go beyond the Arctic Circle to get the full experience of the midnight sun, even in southern Scandinavia it doesn't get completely dark at night toward the end of June.

■ Environment

Environmental issues are always hot topics in this part of the world, in politics and with people in general. Scandinavians take great pride in their natural surroundings, partly because it is less polluted than other parts of the world. A good rule of thumb when traveling in Scandinavian natural areas is to leave things as you found them at all times.

Norway & Sweden

Sweden and Norway have something called **Everyman's Right** (*Allemansret* in Norway, *Allemansrätt* in Sweden). This law is the general right of public access to the wilderness. In a nutshell, it states that one can walk around in the woods and in open landscape as long as nothing is harmed and nobody is disturbed. You can pick berries, mushrooms and flowers as long as they are not protected by law.

There are a few exceptions to the rule. For example, national parks have special rules and some areas such as bird sanctuaries have restricted access. Also remember that motor vehicles may not be driven off of common roads. Fishing sometimes requires special permits which you can read more

about on page 65. Everyman's Right also only applies to the countryside and not to towns or areas near private houses.

Camping is popular with tourists in Sweden and Norway and there are many campsites. If you are not in one of the designated camping areas, you may still camp for one night as long as you don't disturb anyone and as long as it's not on the beach.

Beware of where you walk and always leave the path you walked as you would want to find it. It is also important not to make fires outside designated areas; you will find several such areas when walking in the forests.

Denmark

In Denmark, you also have right to public access but most of the land is owned either privately or by the state and the Everyman's Right can not always be applied in the same way as in Norway and Sweden. On land owned by the state, you have virtually the same rights as in Norway and Sweden, only you can't make camps or fires. On privately owned land it is up to the owner, who may sell these rights to a third person.

However, according to Danish law, you are free to hike and bike on privately owned land from 7 am to sundown, except in sanctuaries and certain protected areas and on private land close to a home.

If you want more information on where you can hike and bike in Denmark, contact Dansk Vandrelaug, ☎ (+45) 33-121165.

■ Geography

Sweden

Sweden is made up of 25 different provinces (*landskap*). There are also 21 counties (*län*) but provinces are generally applied when talking about geographical sections of the country. Counties are more like political divisions.

This is the largest of the three countries and the fifth-largest in Europe with 450,000 square km (175,500 square miles); only Russia, the Ukraine, France and Spain are bigger. Swe-

den is an oblong country, 1,570 km (975 miles) from north to south, which is equivalent to the distance between Malmö in southern Sweden and Rome, Italy. The width is never more than 500 km (300 miles) and in the south as little as 80 km (48 miles).

Half of the country is forested and there are thousands of lakes, of which Lake Vänern is the largest in Scandinavia and third-largest in Europe. The south of Sweden is flat, while the northwest, close to the Norwegian border, is mountainous. More than half of Sweden is made up of forests – most of it coniferous in the northern and central parts. The forests in southern Sweden are mainly deciduous.

Sweden has a long coastline – 3,200 km (2,000 miles). Most of it borders the Baltic Sea to the east where Gotland and Öland, the two biggest islands in the country, are both located.

The highest mountain is Mount Kebnekaise (2,111 m/6,755 feet), in northern Lappland.

Norway

Norway is composed of 19 counties (*fylke*) that function as both geographical and political dividers.

The country covers an area of 387,000 square km (roughly the size of California) out of which 84% is the mainland while the islands of Svalbard and Jan Mayen in the north make up 62,000 square km (24,000 square miles). The country is even longer and narrower than Sweden.

The distance from south to north is 1,750 km (1,085 miles). At the widest point from west to east, Norway is 430 km (267 miles), while the narrowest stretch is only six km, in Tysfjord just south of Narvik.

The coastline is 2,650 km (1,643 miles) long and, if you count the fjords, an incredible 25,150 km (nearly 10 times as long). Norway has thousands of islands, large and small, and, if they are all taken into account as well, the total coastline would be 83,000 km (51,000 miles).

The spectacular, scenic fjords are long, deep and usually surrounded by mountains. Since most of the country's 4½ million people live in urban areas, it leaves most of the country uninhabited. This makes for abundant wildlife in the beautiful

mountains, forests, lakes, and the famous fjords. Half the country's area is above the timberline while 25% is covered by forest. The highest mountain, and the highest peak in Scandinavia, is Mount Galdhøpiggen (2,469 m/8,100 feet), while the longest fjord is Sognefjorden (204 km/126 miles), the longest in the world.

Denmark

Denmark is divided into 13 counties (*amt*). In addition, there are three municipalities, all with county privileges. Two of these municipalities (Frederiksberg and Copenhagen) are within the county of Copenhagen and the third is the island of Bornholm.

The country is primarily made up of one peninsula, Jutland (Jylland in Danish), and two islands, Sealand (Sjælland) and Funen (Fyn). Sealand is the bigger of the two islands and also where Copenhagen, the capital and biggest city, is located. Denmark is the smallest of the three Scandinavian countries, with only 43,000 square km. There are over 400 islands in total but only 100 of them are inhabited.

Denmark has 7,300 km (4,500 miles) of coast line and you are never more than 50 km (30 miles) from the sea, no matter where you are in the country.

The biggest island in the world Greenland, also belongs to Denmark, as do the Faroe Islands. Greenland and the Faroe Islands are autonomous regions and are usually omitted when talking about Denmark as a country, even though they technically belong to Denmark. If Greenland were to be included in the total area of the country, Denmark would be the biggest country in Europe by far and one of the biggest in the world.

■ Economy

All three countries have adapted a welfare system, which means that a big chunk of the GDP goes to education, health care and social benefits. In Denmark and Sweden, more than 50% is spent to support this system. In Norway, the number is slightly lower, mostly

because of the improved economy and increased GDP, thanks to the oil business over the last decades.

Sweden

Sweden is a big supplier of raw material. Forestry, iron ore and hydro-power are all important to the nation's economy, most of which are produced in the north. More than half of Sweden's area consists of forests. Engineering and forestry account for most of the nation's exports.

Although a lot of hydro-power is produced, it is not sufficient to support Sweden completely, so coal, oil and other types of fuel are mostly imported.

Agriculture only represents about 5% of the economy.

One of the biggest problems Sweden's economy faces is the unemployment rate, which has steadily increased since the turn of the century.

Norway

Norway is one of the richest countries in Europe with a GDP 43% higher than that of the average country. The GDP per capita is the second-highest (only Luxembourg's is higher).

The favorable economy is due in large part to its natural resources, particularly oil. In the 1960s, oil was discovered off the Norwegian coast in the North Sea. Today, it makes up about 15% of the total GDP.

Since Norway has such a small population, most of the oil is exported, making it the third-biggest oil exporter in the world (Saudi Arabia and Russia are first and second respectively).

Fishing, mainly for cod and herring, is also a big industry, although not nearly as important as it used to be.

Only about 5% of Norway's land is cultivated, so agriculture is not a big part of the economy.

Denmark

In Denmark, agriculture was for many years the leading source of income. Today, although 65% of the land is cultivated, under 5% of the population is engaged in farming. It is

still a relatively important part of the economy, however – much more so than in Sweden and Norway.

Denmark doesn't have the same amount of natural resources and raw material as Sweden and Norway. Instead, they have concentrated more on products such as furniture and beer (Carlsberg and Tuborg).

Denmark lacks the oil of Norway and the hydro-power Sweden produces, but they take advantage of the windy conditions in the west of Jutland where there are a large number of wind-power stations.

■ Government

All three Scandinavian countries are constitutional monarchies with democratic parliamentary forms of government.

In the Viking Age, all governments were at regional levels. Free men at that time would have meetings to discuss politics and create new laws. These ancient institutions were known as *ting*, a word still used in the political systems in Scandinavia.

The Norwegian Parliament is called *Stortinget* (the great ting) while the Danish equivalent is called *Folketinget* (the people's ting). In Sweden, the Parliament is called *Riksdag*; however, the word ting is included at a regional level in *landsting*, which is the name for the county councils.

Kings and queens have previously had great powers in Scandinavia. These days, the royal families have virtually no power and are more symbolic figures. In Norway and Denmark, the monarchs still officially appoint prime ministers and governments and they approve new laws, but these are mere formalities. Technically, the prime ministers and governments are appointed by the respective parliaments. The governments are often minority governments with several parties represented.

All three countries have general (parliamentary) elections every four years, though in Denmark it is possible for the government in office to force a new election during the term in

progress. The minimum age for citizens to vote in general elections is 18.

Sweden

The Riksdag is unicameral, with 349 seats. The Riksdag appoints the prime minister who then appoints a council of state which implements the Riksdag's decisions and is also responsible for creating new laws.

Norway

Stortinget has 165 seats. Issues are dealt with either jointly or divided up between a larger division, *Odelstinget*, and a smaller, *Lagtinget*. Stortinget appoints the prime minister and council of state.

Denmark

Folketinget is unicameral and has 179 seats. Two seats belong to Greenland and two to the Faroe Islands, which are both autonomous nations within the Danish kingdom. Legislative power is shared between the parliament and the government.

■ Planning Your Trip

When to Go

Most tourists visit in the summer when the weather is warm and the sun stays up much longer – in the north all night long.

Northern Sweden and Norway are popular destinations all year-round. There are great opportunities for skiing and dog sled safaris in the winter. The summers are surprisingly warm considering their latitudes.

Denmark and southern Sweden are best visited in the summer, spring or fall, since that's when most outdoor activities are possible. The winter months are grey and dismal. With no mountains (and usually no snow), there is not much to do outside in winter.

The big cities, such as the three capitals, Stockholm, Oslo and Copenhagen, are well worth visiting year-round, but are still recommended mostly for the summer when most attractions stay open much longer.

What to Bring

In terms of luggage, bring as little as you can get by with. Scandinavia has an excellent system of public transportation and buses, trains and ferries are often used by visitors. The fewer and lighter bags you carry when using these means of transportation, the better off you will be.

Average high temperatures in the summer are generally around 20-25°C (70-75°F) but the weather is unpredictable. Summer gives no guarantees, so be prepared for anything. Rain coats, wind breakers and sweaters are recommended.

Passports

Always bring your passport when traveling to Scandinavia, even though you may not need it. Denmark and Sweden are both members of the EU and many citizens of the EU don't need passports to travel within the union; however, some form of identification, such as driver's license, is always needed.

Norway is not in the EU and everyone except citizens of Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland, is required to bring a passport for entering the country. However, this mostly applies to those flying into Norway; when crossing the borders within Scandinavia, for example by car, bus, train or boat, you will rarely need to show your passport.

Citizens of the UK and outside the EU are required to bring their passports when entering any of the Scandinavian countries.

Visas

Visitors staying less than three months only need passports and are not required to obtain visas. This applies to other European countries, North America and many other regions

in the world but, if you are uncertain which rules apply to your country, you should check with the country's embassy.

If you are not a member of the EU, your passport should be valid for at least three months beyond your intended period of stay.

■ Getting Here

By Plane

Most major airlines have connections with the Scandinavian international airports from other parts of Europe and the United States. Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) is the biggest and best-known airline, but the best deals from abroad can usually be found with the no-frills airlines such as Sterling and Ryanair. SAS is generally expensive, but sometimes they offer good deals. Best to search the web for rates.

- **Scandinavian Airlines**, www.scandinavian.net
  US and Canada, ☎ 1-800-2212350
  Great Britain, ☎ 0870-60727727
- **Ryanair**, www.ryanair.com
  Great Britain, ☎ 0871-2460000
  Ireland, ☎ 0818-303030
  Sweden, ☎ 0900-2020240
  Norway, ☎ 82-000720
- **Sterling**, www.sterlingticket.com
  Sweden, ☎ 08-58769148
  Norway, ☎ 81-558810
  Denmark, ☎ 70-108484
- Other companies worth checking out:
  KLM, www.klm.com
  Lufthansa, www.lufthansa.com
  British Airways, www.britishairways.com

The best rates from the US can be found at **www.priceline.com**.

❖ The Major International Airports

The three major international airports in Scandinavia are:

- **Sweden**
  Stockholm/Arlanda
- **Denmark**
  Copenhagen/Kastrup
- **Norway**
  Oslo/Gardermoen

The Copenhagen Airport is closest to its city (five miles), while the Stockholm and Oslo airports are a little more remote (30 miles). All three have easy access to their respective city centers with trains that take 12 minutes from Kastrup and 20 minutes from Gardermoen and Arlanda. Buses are slower but slightly cheaper options and taxis are also available outside the terminals. For those who wish to rent cars, there are three to five major car rental companies at each location. (Read more about the airports under *Getting Around* in each chapter)

By Boat

The routes below are only from outside Scandinavia. To find out about boats between the Scandinavian countries, see *Getting Around* on page 37.

To Norway

From Newcastle in England you can go to Bergen and Stavanger in western Norway with **Fjord Line**, ☎ 81-533500, www.fjordline.com. You can also travel from Newcastle to Kristiansand on the south coast with **DFDS Seaways**, ☎ 21-621000, www.dfds.no.

Smyril Line and **P & O Scottish Ferries**, www.poscottishferries.com, have boats from Scotland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands (only in the summer).

To Sweden

From Finland, you can go to Stockholm from Helsinki and Turku (via Åland) and to Umeå from Vaasa. There is also a route from Tallin in Estonia to Stockholm.

From Poland, there is a ferry-line from Swinoujscie to Ystad in southern Sweden. From Germany to the south coast of Sweden, you can go from Sassnitz, Travemünde and Rostock to Trelleborg.

To Denmark

From Germany, you can go from Sassnitz to the Danish island of Bornholm and from Puttgarden to Rødby.

Hanstholm in northern Jutland has connections with the Faroe Islands.

■ Getting Around

This section will give you a general idea about getting around in Scandinavia. More details of transportation within certain regions in each country will be provided under *Getting Around* in each chapter that follows.

By Plane

Traveling between the three capitals takes no more than one hour in any direction. The downside is that prices tend to be quite high. Since the airports in Stockholm and Oslo require transportation to city centers, you don't save as much time as you might expect, compared to, for example, high-speed trains.

Using air transportation within Scandinavia is mostly worthwhile only when traveling great distances, such as to the north of Sweden and Norway. If you are out in good time and have flexibility with dates and times, you will find that flying is often cheaper than other means of transportation.

Sweden

Direkt Flyg, ☎ 021-800645

Malmö Aviation, ☎ 0771-550010, www.malmoaviation.se

SAS, ☎ 020-727000, www.scandinavian.net

Skyways, ☎ 0771-959500, www.skyways.se

Norway

The domestic companies, Braathens and Widerøe, are both affiliated with SAS. Widerøe concentrates more on the

shorter flights between smaller cities, particularly in the north.

Norwegian is the low-budget alternative, which is worth checking out before booking through any of the other companies.

Braathens, ☎ 81-520000, www.braathens.no

Coast Air, ☎ 81-544442, www.coastair.no

Norwegian, ☎ 81-521815, www.norwegian.no

SAS, ☎ 81-520400, www.scandinavian.net

Widerøe Airlines, ☎ 81-001200, www.wideroe.no

Denmark

Cimber Air, ☎ 70-101218, www.cimber.dk

Mærsk Air, ☎ 70-107474 www.maersk-air.com

SAS, ☎ 70-102000, www.scandinavian.net

By Boat

You can travel commercially by boat between the three Scandinavian countries. There is, for example, a route with **DFDS Seaways** that includes all three, from the Norwegian capital Oslo to Helsingborg in southern Sweden and then on to the Danish capital Copenhagen. The same company can take you from Kristiansand in southern Norway to Gothenburg on the Swedish west coast. Contacts: Sweden ☎ 031-650650; Denmark ☎ 33-423080; Norway ☎ 21-621340.

Helsingborg-Helsingör is a popular route in the south connecting the narrowest parts of Sweden and Denmark. Lines that travel this route are **Scandlines** (Sweden ☎ 042-186100 or 0410-65000; Denmark ☎ 33-151515), **HH-ferries** (Sweden ☎ 042-198000; Denmark ☎ 49-260155) and **Sundsbussarna** (Sweden ☎ 042-385880; Denmark ☎ 49-213545).

In the north of Jutland in Denmark, Frederikshavn has the best access to Sweden and Norway. The cities of Hirsthals and Hanstholm on northwest Jutland both have frequent connections with Norway.

Every day all year-round one of the 11 ships that operate on the Hurtigruten line departs the harbor in Bergen. The ship

travels up the coast and through the fjords all the way to Kirkenes. Hurtigruten is also known as "the Norwegian Coastal Voyage." Read more about this trip under the Bergen chapter in Norway.

By Train

Anytime you have the option of taking a train, you should do it, as they are both faster and more comfortable and often don't cost more than the buses.

A high-speed train between Stockholm and Copenhagen takes only five hours. The last part of the trip (or first if you travel from Copenhagen) is across the Öresund Bridge between Malmö and Copenhagen. Trains between Copenhagen and Oslo take about 7½ hours and the connection from Oslo to Stockholm takes five hours. Gothenburg's convenient location between the three capitals on the west coast of Sweden provides access to all the capitals in three to four hours.

Check out **www.scanrail.com**, which is a comprehensive site about traveling by train in Scandinavia.

For the Disabled: Most trains have specially adapted seats for the handicapped.

In Sweden

The state-owned **SJ** (Statens Järnvägar) operates on many routes in Sweden. In addition to SJ, there are a few other companies, such as **Tågkompaniet**, **Connex** and **Linx**. A good website to use is **www.resplus.se** (available in Swedish, English and German), which includes all possible routes. On this site, you can buy the whole journey with train and any connections necessary to get to your destination.

Most cities in Sweden have train stations. **High-speed trains**, X-2000, operate in southern Sweden between the bigger cities. In the north, the high-speed trains only go as far up as Härnösand.

The inland route in northern Sweden is known as Inlandsbanan, which is open in the summer. (Read more

about Inlandsbanan in the Lappland chapter in Sweden, page 262.)

In Norway

The company in charge of most of the railways is the state-owned **NSB** (Norges Statsbaner). Often a train ride in Norway means more than just transportation. It also means sightseeing. Cars and buses can, of course, also provide you with this combination but the views from the rails are often more exciting. The **Bergen Railway line** is one of the most frequently trafficked in Norway, connecting the two biggest cities, Oslo and Bergen. It's also perhaps the most scenic of all routes in the country. Many choose to be efficient by taking this seven-hour trip at night. But, unless you are pressed for time (which you shouldn't be on your vacation), I suggest taking this route in the daytime.

Note that trains only operate in the southern half of Norway. Bodø is as far north as any trains will go (Narvik has a train station but only with trains going east into Sweden).

In Denmark

DSB accounts for about 80% of passenger train service in Denmark. Their web site is **www.dsb.dk**. Even better is to use **www.rejseplanen.dk**, which includes all possible routes in Denmark, as well as the bus routes.

By Bus

Where trains are not available, there are almost always bus lines available to your destination. Sometimes trains are replaced with buses when a train is out of service, for example due to technical difficulties, weather problems or strikes.

- For routes and prices:

  Norway: Nor-Way Bussekspress, ☎ 23-002440 or 81-544444, www.nor-way.no

  Sweden: Swebus, ☎ 0200-218218, www.swebus-express.com (or www.resplus.se)

  Denmark: www.rejseplanen.dk

There are also many smaller bus companies operating within each region of the three countries. Check with the local tourist offices for more information.

By Car

Driving in Scandinavia is a popular way of getting around. The roads are usually well maintained and not heavily trafficked compared to most other countries. The downside is that it costs a lot more than other means of transportation as gas is expensive.

The completion of the Öresund Bridge between Sweden and Denmark in 2000 created a link between the Scandinavian Peninsula and the rest of Europe (without having to go around the Baltic Sea).

Highways

Express highways start with the letter E, followed by a number. They connect the bigger cities in Scandinavia.

The **E6**, for example, goes from Malmö in southern Sweden along the west coast past Gothenburg and into Norway through Oslo, continuing up through Trondheim, Narvik and all the way to Kirkenes by the Russian border.

The **E4** in Sweden starts in Helsingborg and goes up to Stockholm, continuing along the east coast of Sweden to the Finnish border.

The **E39** connects the west coast cities in Norway from Kristiansand through Stavanger, Bergen, Ålesund and Trondheim.

The **E20** runs east-west in Denmark between Copenhagen and Esbjerg; the **E45** starts or ends in Frederikshavn in northern Jutland and stretches down to the German border and beyond.

Remember: All road signs in Scandinavia are in kilometers (km). To convert km to miles, multiply by .62.

Driving in Norway

Norway can be a difficult country to get around in a car. The quality of the roads is good but many of them are winding and you often have to combine your car trips with ferries to get to your destination. One thing that separates Norway from its neighbors is the toll roads. Building and maintaining the infrastructure in Norway is expensive and the tolls finance part of these costs. Tolls exist in the cities as well as out in the countryside and fees vary greatly but are generally higher on the longer coastal roads than near the big cities.

Tunnels are another thing you have to get used to on the Norwegian roads. There are supposedly more tunnels per capita in Norway than any other country in the world. Many tunnels are long, narrow and winding just like the roads. When the Lærdal Tunnel in western Norway was inaugurated in 2000, it became the longest car-tunnel in the world at 24.5 km, overtaking the St Gotthard Tunnel in Switzerland.

The change of seasons is another thing to consider. Many roads, especially the scenic tourist roads, close sometime in October-November and don't open until May-June due to icy conditions on the steep winding roads.

Many improvements have been made over the years to enable driving in the winter by making new tunnels. The downside of this if you're visiting in the summer is that you might miss out on some of the scenic tourist roads without even knowing about it. Driving in Norway can be as much of an adventure as transportation so read the *Getting Around* sections and any sightseeing suggestions in the chapters before you travel.

Driving in Denmark

Driving in Denmark is easy since the country is flat and quite small. You should always look for the square signs with flowers found all over Denmark, indicating a particularly nice road stretch known as the **Marguerite Route**. You will find this route on most maps and, if you don't, you can ask any tourist office for maps of the Marguerite Route. Sometimes, however, the highways are your only choice. Driving across the Great Belt, for example, on the bridge connecting Sealand with Funen, you will need to take the E20 and also pay a toll of 245 kr. With the exception of the Great Belt Bridge, Danish

highways and bridges within the country are toll-free. Car-ferries, on the other hand, such as the ones found in the South Funen archipelago, are not free of charge.

Renting Cars

Scandinavia is expensive compared to most countries and car rentals are no exception. Renting a car in Norway is sometimes as much as three times more expensive than in Sweden or Denmark. You can save a lot by renting a car in Sweden, taking it across the border, then returning it in Sweden. But remember that you will always pay extra if returning it at a different location than where you picked it up.

If you have to rent a car in Norway, **Rent-a-Wreck**, www.rentawreck.no, is the least expensive company. Many international companies can be found all over Scandinavia. The biggest and most commonly seen are Hertz, Avis, Europcar and Budget. You'll find contact information for each company in the chapters that follow.

Bridges Connecting Scandinavia

❖ **Between Denmark & Sweden: The Öresund Bridge**

A fixed connection between Sweden and Denmark had been contemplated for many years. The environmental impact was the main arguments against construction. It is vital to have unchanged salt and oxygen levels in the water flowing into the Baltic Sea, so there could be no obstructions in Öresund. In 1991, the governments of Sweden and Denmark made a decision to build the bridge provided that the link would in no way block the water currents.

The bridge was inaugurated in July 2000, almost 10 years after the two countries finally agreed to build it. Since it opened, traffic across the sound has increased by 20%. The majority of travelers are, of course, Danish and Swedish but tourists from other countries have also benefited greatly

thanks to the train connection between Malmö and the Kastrup Airport in Copenhagen. The Öresund Bridge is operated by a company called Öresundskonsortiet, which is jointly owned by the two governments.

The link is a combination of railway and motorway, stretching about 16 km (10 miles). It consists of three parts: The bridge itself, which is eight km long (five miles), the four-km (2½-mile) artificial island of Pebersholm and a four-km tunnel connecting Pebersholm with Kastrup, where the Copenhagen airport is located.

FACTS ABOUT THE BRIDGE

- The eight-km bridge consists of a high bridge and two approach bridges.
- The pylon legs of the bridge stand on the Swedish side of the sound and are the highest man-made structure in Sweden at 204 meters (550 feet).
- Over 11 million vehicles have crossed the bridge.
- It is the longest cable-stayed main span in the world for road and rail traffic.
- Total cost: 14.8 billion Danish Kroner.
- Over 10,000 vehicles and 16,000 train passengers travel daily across the bridge.

Payment: All trips across the Öresund Bridge are paid in Sweden. If you are driving to Sweden, you pay the toll after you have crossed the bridge. If you are headed for Denmark, you pay the toll before you cross the bridge.

When paying cash, you may use the following currencies: Danish Kroner, Swedish Kroner, Euro, Norwegian Kroner, US Dollars, British Pounds and Swiss Francs. If you pay in currencies other than Danish or Swedish, change is always in Danish.

Some lanes have automatic machines that take debit or credit cards. These lanes are preferable if you wish to pay by card but you can also pay by card in the manned lanes. If you use a Swedish card to pay, you will be charged in Swedish Kroner; if

you use a Danish or foreign card, you will be charged in Danish Kroner.

- Motorcycles: 130 Danish Kroner
- Cars six meters (18 feet) or less: 235 Danish Kroner
- Cars with trailers/caravans longer than six meters: 470 Danish Kroner
- Train from Malmö to Copenhagen takes 35 minutes and costs about 75 Danish Kroner

Tip: Discounts are sometimes available; check www.oeresundsbron.com. Öresundsbro Konsortiet, Customer Service, ☎ 70-239060 (Denmark), 040-223000 (Sweden).

❖ Between Sweden and Norway: The Svinesund Bridge

A new suspension bridge, connecting the E6 highway by Svinesund on the border between Norway and Sweden, used by travelers between Oslo and Gothenburg, was inaugurated in the summer of 2005.

It was no coincidence that this 704-m (2,309-foot) bridge was completed in 2005, which was the centenary of the union dissolution between Sweden and Norway. The old bridge, which was built during World War II, is still in use.

DISTANCES TO SVINESUND	
Oslo	110 km
Gothenburg	180 km
Copenhagen	500 km
Stockholm	450 km

Traffic Regulations

All European drivers' licenses are valid. Vehicles not registered in Sweden must display a nationality sign.

Lights need to be switched on even during daylight hours. Drivers must use dipped headlights or special daytime driving lights at all times throughout Scandinavia.

You are allowed to use your mobile phone when driving but in Norway and Denmark you have to use hands-free.

Safety

The use of seat belts is compulsory in Scandinavia for both front and back seats. If seat belts have not been installed for all seats, you must use those seats that have belts as far as possible. Children under age seven must use special safety equipment such as baby protector, child seat and pad with belt or chair with belt.

You are required to use a helmet when riding a motorcycle or moped.

For all unattended, signposted pedestrian crossings, vehicles are obliged to give way to pedestrians who are on, or about to use, the crossing.

Alcohol Limits

The alcohol limit for driving in Sweden and Norway is 20 milligrams/100 ml blood; in Denmark, it's 50 milligrams/100 ml blood. The police have the right to take alcohol tests by having drivers blow into a bag even if there is no suspicion of them being under the influence of alcohol. If you are above the limit when stopped by police, you could face jail time. Exceptions are not made for foreign citizens.

Wild Animals

There are many wild animals in northern Sweden and Norway, particularly elk, roe deer and reindeer. Be extra cautious at dawn and dusk and observe the road signs. Half of all car accidents in this region involve wild animals.

Speed Limits

Speed limits are almost always signposted by the roadside. If you are uncertain, the following speed limits usually apply:

❖ **Sweden**

- 50 km per hour in urban/built up areas (sometimes 30 km per hour, for example outside schools and hospitals).
- 70 km per hour or 90 km per hour outside built-up areas.

- 110 km per hour on express highways. Cars with trailers may not drive over 80 km/h).

❖ **Norway**

- 50 km per hour in urban/built up areas (sometimes 30 km per hour).
- 80 km per hour outside built-up areas.
- 90 km per hour on express highways (80 km per hour for cars with trailers and 60 km per hour if the trailer does not have brakes).

❖ **Denmark**

- 50 km per hour in urban areas (40 km per hour in Copenhagen).
- 80 km per hour outside built-up areas.
- 110 or 130 km per hour on express highways.

Tip: There is a lot of roadwork in the summer. Reduce your speed and show consideration to the road workers. The national information associations have up-to-date information on roadwork (see *Information* further down). Call or check on their websites.

Parking

Parking is often free of charge in small cities and communities. In the bigger cities, parking can be costly. You can sometimes get a couple of hours of free parking when using a "parking disc" which can be obtained at gas stations and tourist offices. With this disc, you announce the time you arrived and place the disc on the dashboard or the inside of the windshield. In Denmark, this disc is compulsory in some areas.

Gas/Petrol

Prices for gas vary and have had a tendency to increase steadily over the years. The prices in Norway and Sweden recently were just over 10 kr per liter (which means that it's cheaper in Sweden for a foreign tourist since the Swedish kr is worth less).

In Denmark, the price of gas is about 8.50 kr per liter which is the same price as in Sweden since 1 Danish kr is about 1.20 Swedish kr.

Diesel is about 1.50 kr cheaper per liter than gas in Scandinavia.

In addition to manned stations providing services, there are numerous unmanned stations that stay open round the clock. The unmanned stations accept bills and major international credit cards.

Information

If you need information about roads and road conditions:

❖ **Sweden**

The **Swedish National Road Administration**, ☎ 0243-75000, www.vv.se.

❖ **Norway**

Road User Information Service, ☎ 174 (within Norway) or 81-548991 (from abroad) for assistance 24 hours a day. Or log on to www.vegvesen.no for more information.

❖ **Denmark**

Federation of Danish Motorists, ☎ 45-270707, www.fdm.dk.

Emergencies

❖ **Norway**

If your car breaks down, call the **Norwegian Automobile Association**, ☎ 22-341400.

You can also call a 24-hour emergency service, ☎ 81-000505. This only applies if you are a member of the AIT (Allience International de Tourisme). If you are renting a car, check with your rental company about which association applies to you.

Accidents with Animals: Call the **Road User Information Center**, ☎ 175, to report an accident involving an animal, even if you were not involved yourself.

❖ **Sweden**

You can call the emergency services, ☎ 020-910040 for emergencies.

❖ **Denmark**

If your car breaks down, call **Falck Rescue Service**, ☎ 44-922222 (24 hours a day).

■ Practicalities

Customs

When Sweden and Denmark joined the European Union (EU) in the 1990s, the amounts of alcohol and tobacco you could bring into the countries increased tremendously – as long as you are traveling from another EU country and the goods are only for personal use.

In 2004, an additional 10 countries joined the EU, making for a total of 25 countries. Norway is one of few countries in Europe, and the only country in Western Europe besides Switzerland, that is not in the EU.

Sweden & Denmark

If you arrive in southern Sweden from Denmark, which a lot of foreign tourists do, you don't have much to worry about as far as the amount of alcohol and tobacco you bring. Should you arrive in Sweden or Denmark directly from a non-EU country, however, you should be aware of the following rules regarding customs.

Wines and spirits: Duty-free allowance for persons aged 20 and over arriving from a non-EU country is one liter hard liquor, or two liters fortified wine (max 22% alcohol by vol.), plus two liters wine (max. 15% by vol.).

Tobacco: Duty-free allowance for persons over 18 arriving from a non-EU country, 200 cigarettes or 100 cigarillos or 50 cigars or 250 g other tobacco products.

Norway

Since alcohol, tobacco and food is much more expensive in Norway than Sweden, many Norwegians living within rea-

sonable driving distance from Sweden cross the border just to stock up on these items. When you cross the border to Norway from any other country, whether it's part of the EU or not, you should be aware of the following regulations.

Wines and spirits: You are allowed to bring one liter of liquor containing less than 60% alcohol and one liter of wine (max 22%). In addition, you can bring two liters of beer containing less than 4.75%.

If you wish, you can replace the liquor bottle with an extra liter of wine.

Tobacco: You can bring 200 cigarettes or 250 grams of other tobacco products.

Remember that you must be at least 20 years of age to bring in liquor to Norway; for wine, beer, cigarettes and tobacco the age requirement is 18.

Money

Currency

The Scandinavian countries still have their own currencies; in other words, they are not part of the euro. Sweden voted against joining the common European currency in a referendum in September 2003. Denmark rejected the idea three years earlier and Norway is not even a member of the European Union.

The currencies are called *krona* and *öre* in Sweden and *krone* and *øre* in Norway and Denmark (sometimes crown in English), where 1 krona/krone = 100 öre/øre. The Swedish currency is officially abbreviated SEK, the Danish DKK and the Norwegian NOK, but in this book they will all simply be abbreviated "kr" in all chapters, as this is the most common form of abbreviation used by the general population in the respective countries. Since all three currencies will be abbreviated the same way (kr), bear in mind that an amount has a different value when converting into another currency, depending on which country you are reading about.

As the exchange rates fluctuate, you should check the most recent rates before you travel. At publication, the rates were:

1 € . . . . . 9.15 SEK, 7.45 DKK, 8.20 NOK
1 US$ . . . . . 7.10 SEK, 5.80 DKK, 6.35 NOK
1 £. . . . . 13.35 SEK, 10.85 DKK, 11.95 NOK

- In **Sweden**, the following notes are available: 1,000, 500, 100, 50, and 20 kr. The coins are 10, 5, 1 kr and 50 öre.
- In **Denmark**, the following notes are available: 1,000, 500, 200, 100 and 50. The coins are 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 kr, and 50 and 25 øre.
- In **Norway**, the following notes are available: 1,000, 500, 200, 100 and 50. The coins are 20, 10, 5 and 1 kr and 50 øre.

Currency Exchange

Currency can be exchanged at banks and most post offices, as well as major international airports. Besides banks and post offices, some tourist information offices exchange money.

Currency may also be exchanged at Forex outlets, which are located in most cities and at major airports.

ATMs are widely used all over Scandinavia and most foreign cards linked to major credit card companies will be accepted. Visa, MasterCard and American Express are accepted virtually everywhere. Traveler's checks are also an option and can be cashed at banks or used in most restaurants and shops. There are virtually no restrictions on the import and export of foreign currency in Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

Some shops, hotels and attractions, especially those in big cities and cities frequently visited by international travelers (for example major ports or cities near a national border), will accept foreign currencies but, if they do, you will be given a much worse exchange rate than the normal one. You will only be able to pay with bills and you can expect to get your change back in the currency of the country you are in.

Tipping

Tipping is not essential and is up to each individual. Generally, things are more expensive in Scandinavia than in other parts of Europe and the United States, partly because service charges and tax are always included in the price.

Costs

Scandinavia is expensive to most foreign tourists and, of the three countries, Norway is by far the most expensive. You will probably notice while reading the chapters about Norway that there is a little more emphasis on different alternatives when it comes to food and transportation, compared to Sweden and Denmark. Those traveling on a tight budget should pay special attention to these and do a little extra planning before visiting Norway. Oslo was recently ranked as the most expensive capital in the world. Stockholm and Copenhagen were not far behind.

Credit Cards

Major international credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express are widely accepted in Scandinavia. However, cash is good to have handy. Some gas stations, for example, don't accept cards.

When shopping or dining in Denmark, make sure your credit card is accepted beforehand. In many places you can only pay with Danish bank cards; even the major international companies such as MasterCard and Visa are not always honored. Also be mindful of extra charges that they might put on when you pay with a card that they don't necessarily inform you about. Bring some cash with you when you go out on the town just in case!

Going Metric

To make your travel a bit easier, we have provided this chart that shows metric equivalents for the measurements you are familiar with.

GENERAL MEASUREMENTS

1 kilometer = .6124 miles
1 mile = 1.6093 kilometers
1 foot = .304 meters
1 inch = 2.54 centimeters
1 square mile = 2.59 square kilometers

1 pound = .4536 kilograms
1 ounce = 28.35 grams
1 imperial gallon = 4.5459 liters

1 US gallon = 3.7854 liters
1 quart = .94635 liters

TEMPERATURES

For Fahrenheit: Multiply Centigrade figure by 1.8 and add 32.
For Centigrade: Subtract 32 from Fahrenheit figure and divide by 1.8.

Centigrade	Fahrenheit
40°	104°
35°	95°
30°	86°
25°	77°
20°	64
15°	59°
10°	50°

Banks

Sweden: Banks are open Monday to Friday, 9:30 am to 3 pm, in some large towns until 5:30 pm. On Thursdays, banks remain open until 6 pm. Saturday and Sunday they are closed.

Norway: Banks are usually open between 9 am and 3 pm and for an hour longer on Thursdays. They are closed on Saturdays and Sundays.

Denmark: Monday to Friday, 9:30 am to 4 pm (Thursdays until 6 pm).

Post Offices

Open during normal shopping hours. If you can't find one, try a grocery store; they can sometimes offer the basic services there.

Shopping

General Business Hours

Sweden: On weekdays, shops usually stay open between 9 am and 6 pm, on Saturdays between 9 am and 1 pm. Department stores and grocery stores stay open longer, and are open all days of the week. Most stores are closed on public holidays and on days before public holidays they shut early.

Norway: Shops are open from 10 am until 5 pm Monday to Friday, but sometimes until 7 pm on Thursdays. Saturdays, they open at 9 am and close at 3 pm; on Sundays they are closed all day. Shopping centers sometimes stay open as late as 9 pm (6 pm on Saturdays).

Most supermarkets stay open until 8 pm during the week and either to 4 or 6 pm on Saturdays.

Denmark: Monday to Thursday 9 or 10 am until 5:30 or 6 pm, on Fridays 10 am to 6 pm (in bigger cities usually until 8 pm), Saturday 9 am to 1 pm (on the first Saturday of every month until 5 pm).

Pharmacies

Pharmacies in Scandinavia are called *Apotek* and are open during regular shopping hours. There are a few with extended

opening hours and each capital has a pharmacy open 24 hours a day every day.

❖ **Pharmacies Open Around the Clock:**

In Stockholm: Apotek C.W. Scheele, Klarabergsviadukten 64 (near the Central Train Station), ☎ 08-4548130.

In Oslo: Jernbanetorget Apotek, Jernbanetorget 4B (the square outside the Central Train Station), ☎ 23-358100.

In Copenhagen: Steno Apotek, Vesterbrogade 6C, (opposite the Central Train Station), ☎ 33-148266.

Groceries

Most food stores are open longer than regular shops, and normally stay open during the weekend as well. For late-night or emergency grocery shopping, most gas stations have a limited supply.

Tip: Alcohol, tobacco and food is much more expensive in Norway than Sweden and many Norwegians living within reasonable driving distance from Sweden cross the border particularly to go shopping for these items.

VAT Refund

Value added tax (VAT) is included in prices when you purchase something. This can be refunded (for non-EU residents only) at the airport by presenting a VAT refund form which can be obtained at many shops. Ask inside or look for a "tax free shopping" sign.

The minimum purchase requirement from each store to qualify for a refund is 308 kr in Norway, 300 kr in Denmark and 200 kr in Sweden.

For more information, check out **www.globalrefund.com**.

Alcohol

Norway and **Sweden** both have monopolized markets where one company has the exclusive right to sell liquor. Branches

are found all over the country. Light and medium-strong beers can be purchased in supermarkets.

In Sweden, the company is called Systembolaget. The minimum age for buying is 20. In bars and restaurants you have to be 18 to order an alcoholic drink. Stores are open during general shopping hours.

In Norway, it's called Vinmonopolet. You can buy beer and wine when you are 18 but for liquor the age is 20. Stores are usually open Monday-Wednesday, 10 am-5 pm; Thursday and Friday most stores stay open an hour longer. Saturdays, 9 am-3 pm.

Tip: At Vinmonopolet and Systembolaget stores, the waiting time can be atrocious. If you can help it, don't do your shopping late in the afternoons, especially on Fridays, when the lines are often the longest.

In **Denmark**, beer, wine and liquor are sold in grocery stores as well as specialized liquor stores. There are only a few regulations, for example that stores cannot sell alcohol between 8 pm and 6 am. You only have to be 16 years old to buy in stores; for bars and restaurants, the minimum age is 18.

Electrical Appliances

Electricity supply in Scandinavia is 220 volts. If you bring any electrical appliances with you, make sure to use an adaptor.

Pets

There are strict regulations on bringing pets into the Scandinavian countries. Contact the countries' embassies to find out more about these rules.

Phones

To dial international numbers, use 00 plus the country code. If calling Scandinavia from abroad, the country code is 45 for Denmark, 46 for Sweden and 47 for Norway.

Emergency Numbers

❖ **Norway**
Fire 110
Police 112
Ambulance 113

❖ **Sweden**
112

❖ **Denmark**
112

Smoking

Sweden & Norway

Smoking is prohibited in all public indoor places and buildings such as hotel lobbies but restaurants will always have sections for non-smokers – except in Norway. There is no smoking on domestic flights or public transportation but long-distance trains will have designated smoking areas. You need to be 18 years old to buy tobacco products.

Denmark

Smoking is permitted in public places unless there are non-smoking signs. Most restaurants still permit smoking. Smoking is prohibited on all domestic flights. The minimum age for buying tobacco is 16.

Public Holidays

Sweden

New Years Day . . . . . Jan 1
Epiphany . . . . . Jan 6
Good Friday . . . . . Late March to late April
Easter Sunday . . . . . Late March to late April
Easter Monday. . . . . Late March to late April
Labor Day . . . . . May 1
Ascension Day. . . . . Early May to late May
Whit Sunday . . . . . Mid-May to early June
National Day . . . . . June 6
Midsummer's Day . . . . . Saturday May 20-26
All Saint's Day . . . . . First Saturday in November
Christmas Day. . . . . December 25
Boxing Day. . . . . December 26

Norway

New Years Day . . . . . January 1
Palm Sunday . . . . . Sunday before Easter week
Maundy Thursday . . . . . Late March to late April
Good Friday . . . . . Late March to late April
Easter Sunday . . . . . Late March to late April
Easter Monday . . . . . Mate March to late April
Public Holiday . . . . . May 1
Constitution Day . . . . . May 17
Ascension Day . . . . . Early May to late May
Whit Sunday . . . . . Mid-May to early June
Whit Monday . . . . . Mid-May to early June
Christmas Day . . . . . December 25
Boxing Day . . . . . December 26

Denmark

New Years Day . . . . . January 1
Maundy Thursday . . . . . Late March to late April
Good Friday . . . . . Late March to late April
Easter Sunday . . . . . Late March to late April
Easter Monday . . . . . Late March to late April
Common Prayer's Day . . . . . Late April to mid May
Ascension Day . . . . . Early May to late May
Whit Sunday . . . . . Mid-May to early June
Whit Monday . . . . . Mid-May to early June
Constitution Day . . . . . June 5
Christmas Day . . . . . December 25
Boxing Day . . . . . December 26

■ Places to Stay

Hotels

Generally, hotels in Scandinavia have high standards. Prices will vary greatly depending on quality and location but most have special rates during weekends and in the summers. Breakfasts are almost always included in the price.

For hotels in Sweden, visit **www.hotelsinsweden.net** or **www.accommodationsweden.se**.

In Norway, **www.fjordpass.no** offers lists of hotels where you can get discounts.

Many of Denmark's hotels are members of HORESTA (Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Industry Employers' Association), which ranks all their hotels on a scale from 1 to 5. You can find out more about the criteria for these ratings and search for hotels at **www.danishhotels.dk**.

> **For the disabled:** Most hotels and restaurants in Scandinavia accommodate disabled travelers well.

Camping

Sweden

Sweden is popular with campers. Thanks to the "Everyman's Right" (see *Environment*, above) you can set up a tent almost anywhere in the wilderness. There are more than 750 campsites all over the country. Many of them can, in addition to renting out space for your camper or tent, also offer cabins that usually are high-quality and are affordable alternatives to hostels.

Campsites are ranked from 1 to 5 stars and the star ranking reflects both the standard and price. Generally, at a 3-star campsite you will pay about 100 kr to set up your tent or caravan. A cabin will cost about 300 kr.

For more information, log onto **www.camping.se**.

Norway

Camping is also popular in Norway, which has the same Everyman's Right as in Sweden. At the designated campsites, you can rent a space for a camper van or tent for 100-150 kr at any of the campsites located all over the country. Most campsites will also have cabins available for about 250-350 kr.

Find out more by contacting **Reiselivsbedriftenes Landsførening**, ☎ 23-088620, www.rbl.no.

Denmark

Denmark is perhaps the most popular of the three countries for campers. There are more than 500 campsites all over the

country, each with a star rating from 1 to 5. It's important to remember when camping in Denmark that you are not allowed to camp outside these official sites, unlike in Sweden and Norway.

For more information about camping in Denmark, such as where to find the campsites and prices, contact the **Danish Camping Board**, ☎ 39-278844, **www.camping.dk**, or check out **www.teltpladser.dk**.

Hostels

Sweden

There are hundreds of hostels all over Sweden, many of which belong to **Svenska Turistföreningen (STF)**. You can become a member of this organization and get discounts on accommodations, normally 45 kr cheaper per night. A one-year membership costs 275 kr, which means that you need to spend at least seven nights in one of STF's hostels to get your money's worth.

There are normally two to five beds in a room and the price is 100-250 kr (plus 45 kr for non-members). In addition, most places can offer both single and double rooms, which cost around 150-250 kr for a single and 250-400 kr for a double (member prices).

Bathrooms are usually shared but single and double rooms sometimes have private baths. You can bring your own bed linen or rent from the hostel for about 50 kr. Sleeping bags are not always permitted for hygienic reasons; if you plan to bring one, you should always check with the hostel first.

Breakfast is sometimes offered but you have to pay extra, 50-60 kr. You can always buy your own food and use the shared kitchen.

Find out more by calling ☎ 08-4632270 or log onto **www.merasverige.nu**.

Besides the STF Hostels, there are several independent hostels and many of them are members of an organization called the **Swedish Youth Hostel Association (SVIF)**. Since they

are independent, prices will vary depending on quality and location. For more information, log onto **www.svif.se**.

Norway

Many hostels in Norway are members of the organization called **Hostelling International Norway (HI Norway)**, an affiliate of the International Youth Hostel Federation. You don't have to be a member in order to stay at these hostels in Norway but you will get discounts, not only on accommodations but on other activities and attractions. A membership costs 250 kr and, if you are not a member, you will pay an extra 25 kr when renting a bed.

Prices for accommodations are cheap, especially considering the high costs in general when traveling in Norway. A bed in a dormitory, which usually contains two to four beds, costs around 150-225 kr but you can find prices as low as 90 kr at some places. Double rooms can cost anywhere from 200 kr to 700 kr.

Breakfasts are sometimes included in the price but normally you have to pay an additional 50-60 kr. You can bring your own bed linen or rent it at the hostel. Sleeping bags are not permitted.

The **Norwegian Hostel Association (Norske Vandrerhjem)** has an office at Torggata in Oslo and can also be contacted at ☎ 23-139300, **www.vandrerhjem.no**.

Denmark

Many hostels in Denmark belong to the association called **Danhostel**, which is affiliated with Hostelling International. The standard of these hostels is quite high and each hostel has a star rating of 1 to 5.

A one-year membership costs 160 kr, but as a foreign tourist you can pay an extra 30 kr per night if you don't wish to purchase a membership. Price for a bed in a dormitory is around 100 kr and never more than 118 kr (in addition to the 30 kr if you are not a member). For a single bedroom you can expect to pay 250-350 kr and for a double room 350-450 kr.

Danhostel has their main office on Vesterbrogade 39 in Copenhagen and can be reached at ☎ 33-313612, **www.danhostel.dk**.

Tip: Find out more on the web about hostels in Scandinavia (and the rest of the world) at **www.hihostels.com**. There are about 450 hostels worldwide included.

Bed & Breakfasts, Rooms for Rent

Despite the name, breakfast is not always included in the price of a B&B, but it's normally available for 25-50 kr extra. The rooms are generally quite cheap, ranging from 125 to 300 kr per person per night. Room standards vary greatly since they are privately owned. You should always ask to see the room before you make a decision.

Get more information by contacting:

- **Bed and Breakfast Norway**, Dalsegg, Øvre Surnadal, ☎ 99-237799, www.bbnorway.com.
- **Dansk Bed and Breakfast**, Bernstorffsvej 71, 2900 Hellerup, ☎ 39-610405, www.bbdk.dk.
- **Bed & Breakfast Service Stockholm**, Sidenvägen 17, Ekerö, ☎ 08-6605565, www.bedbreakfast.se.

Other Forms of Accommodation

Cabins in Norway

Renting a cabin (*hut*) in Norway is the most popular form of accommodation on the countryside. In order to stay at any of these you have to be a member of the **Norwegian Mountain Touring Association** (called DNT, short for Den Norske Turistforeningen), which is in charge of renting out these cabins. By paying the fee you will have access to all cabins in Norway (more than 400) for a calendar year.

Their main office is in downtown Oslo and can be contacted at ☎ 22-822800, www.turistforeningen.no.

There are three types of cabins:

Non-service

About half the cabins are non-service, which means they are equipped with bedspreads, comforters and sometimes quilts, but you have to bring your own bed linens or sleeping bags.

Self-service

This is like a non-service but with a food supply. These cabins are sometimes manned as well.

Served cabins

Most of these cabins have electricity and running water. Bathrooms are normally shared and located in the hallways.

Inns in Denmark

The Danish word for inn is *kro* and if you see that word on a sign along the road, you have found the perfect combination of a place to stay and a place to eat. A long time ago, when people traveled by horse, it was decided that a *kro* should be placed every 20 km along all common roads in Denmark and, still today, you will find inns all over the country. They are as popular as ever for spending the night, grabbing a bite to eat, or both. The price range for inns is about the same as for hotels; you can find really cheap ones for no more than 300 kr but some are exclusive.

For more information, try **www.krohotel.dk**.

Farms

Staying on a farm is practically like a bed and breakfast. Denmark is a flat country with fertile soil and by far the most agricultural of the three countries. You can experience it hands-on by staying on a farm in Denmark and at the same time get to know the natives in their own environment. Price for a double room will be around 200 kr but can vary between the regions. Find out more by visiting **www.bondegaardsferie.dk** or calling ☎ 86-373900, where you can also make reservations. They can also be made through tourist offices.

For Sweden, **www.bopalantgard.org** is a comprehensive site with all the information you need plus a list of farms. The Norwegian Tourist Board's site, **www.visitnorway.com**, lists most farms available in Norway.

■ Places to Eat

Eating out is generally regarded as quite expensive by foreign tourists, but it doesn't have to be. Most restaurants have special offers for lunch Mon-Fri called "dagens rätt" in Sweden and "dagens ret" in Norway and Denmark. They usually cost 50-70 kr and normally include beverage, salad buffet, bread, and coffee. Really good value as you can get the same meal as you would at dinnertime but for half the price.

Also keep in mind that tipping is always included in the price so there are no hidden charges.

Tip: Golf courses have some of the best restaurants and especially if you are traveling along highways where there are few alternatives to fast food places and sloppy diners. Look for the golfer sign and names followed by the abbreviation GK (golf club).

■ Adventures

Hiking

Norway is the country in Scandinavia mostly associated with hiking. In Denmark and southern Sweden, hiking is not nearly as interesting in the flat terrain; northwestern Sweden, on the other hand, is well suited to it and, like its western neighbor, is also popular with hikers. There is a big difference between hiking in Norway and Sweden, though, and that difference involves accessibility. While most people have to travel great distances to reach the best hiking areas in Sweden, since all the big cities are in the south and along the east coast, Norwegians have great hiking "just around the corner." The bigger cities like Oslo and Bergen have hiking within easy reach. Oslo, for example, consists of 75% green areas and lakes in the famous "Marka" surrounding the concrete-dominated downtown area.

Norway is a big country and Norwegians are not afraid of traveling to more remote places for great hiking either. The most famous hiking area in Norway is probably **Jotunheimen**, which is quite remote in the central part of the country but still within reasonable driving distance from both Oslo and Bergen.

Biking

Denmark is the number-one biking country of the three. Being a small and flat country, it's often the best way of getting around and biking is extremely popular for recreation. Denmark has over 10,000 km/6,200 miles of designated biking trails, not bad for a country of only 45,000 square km (17,550 square miles). The country consists of one peninsula and over 400 islands, most of which are connected by ferries and/or bridges. That makes island-hopping on bikes a great adventure. You can bring your bike along with you on boats and often on trains and buses too if you feel the need.

As far as biking in the cities is concerned, it's definitely better than driving. The only city in Denmark so big that a faster form of transportation will sometimes be needed is Copenhagen. But even there, you will often find a bike the most useful since parking is expensive and traffic can be brutal.

You can even borrow a bike from the city by putting a small deposit down. As long as you don't take it beyond the city limits (which you could get a ticket for) and you return it at the end of the day, you have a great (and cheap) way of getting around the capital.

Every tourist office in Denmark sells detailed bike maps of their county, costing between 50 and 100 kr.

Skiing

Norway is the home of skiing, not only for Scandinavia, but for the whole world. The word ski comes from an ancient term meaning "split piece of wood." The county of Telemark gave its name to an ancient and, in recent years, increasingly popular style of skiing.

Telemark is a type of alpine skiing, but the equipment and technique is very different from slalom. The telemark ski has a boot that only is connected to the ski at the toes, and the skis are much thinner, similar to cross-country equipment. When turning, a telemark skier pulls his inside knee beneath the body with a flexed knee and raised heel.

While Norway has some great ski resorts for alpine skiing and produced several great skiers in the four disciplines (slalom, giant-slalom, Super-G and downhill), the most popular form of skiing by far is cross-country, which is considered the national sport.

In Sweden, skiing is also popular, particularly in the mountains in the northwestern part of the country. Alpine skiing became popular in Sweden during the 1970s and 1980s, thanks to Ingemar Stenmark, who established himself as the best skier in the world and gave the sport an enormous boost in the country. His 86 victories in World Cup races is a record no other skier has even come close to.

Cross-country skiing in Sweden is quite popular but not nearly as popular as in Norway. The southern parts of Sweden and the entire country of Denmark get little snow, which obviously makes skiing difficult. Even if there were snow, alpine skiing would be out of the question in most places since the landscape is flat.

Tip: You can learn all about the history of skiing by visiting the oldest ski museum in the world, which is in Holmenkollen in Oslo. Read more about how to get there in the Oslo chapter.

Rafting

Rafting is mostly done in the mountainous parts of Scandinavia. The best time to go rafting is in late spring or early summer when the snow has just melted in the mountains, creating the strongest rapids. **Jämtland** and **Lappland** are two provinces in Sweden providing good settings for rafting

but perhaps the best rafting is found along **Vindelälven** in Västerbotten. In Norway, the south-central region has the best rafting.

Fishing

Sea fishing is most often free in Norway and Sweden if using a rod or line, but you are required to buy a fishing permit when fishing in freshwater. The permits cost 50-100 kr for one day and can be purchased at sports shops, gas stations, tourist offices and campsites. Some areas are privately owned so when you buy the permit, make sure to find out exactly where you are allowed to fish.

In Norway, those fishing for salmon, sea trout and sea char, if 16 years of age or older, are required to pay a license fee. This fee is around 200 kr for one year.

Non-residents fishing in Norway are not allowed to sell their catch.

In Denmark, adults are always required to have permits when fishing, even in the sea. The permit costs around 30 kr per day or 90 kr for a whole week and can be purchased at tourist offices, campsites and cabin rentals, among other places.

Sweden

The South

■ Gothenburg

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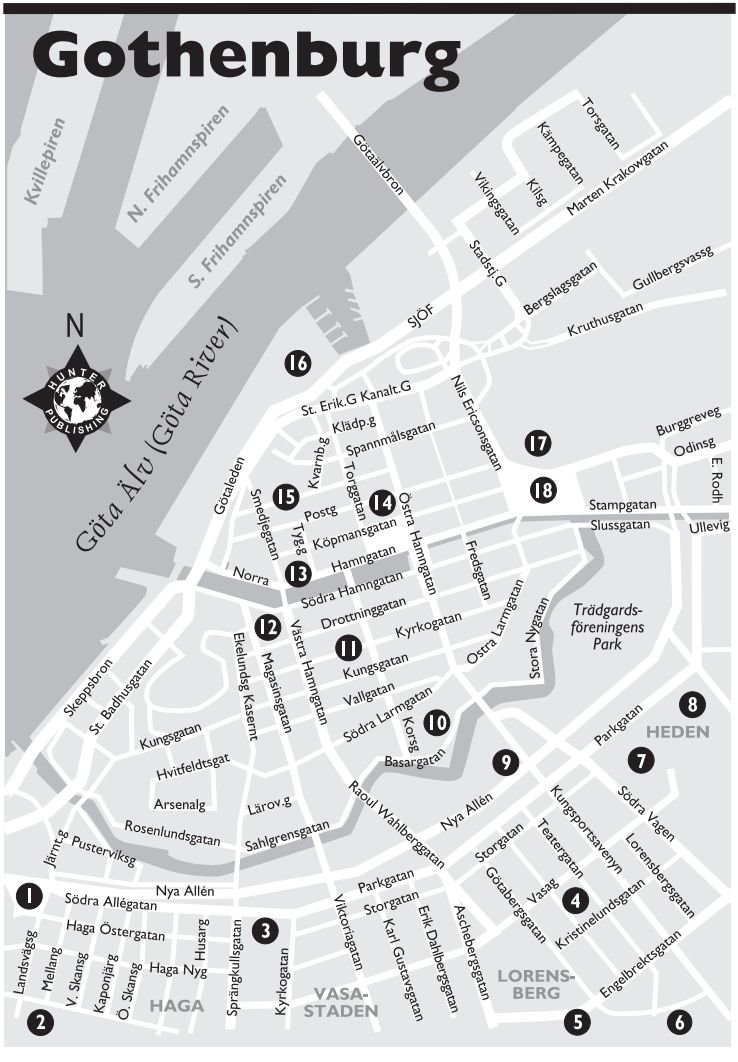
Gothenburg (Göteborg in Swedish), the second-biggest city in Sweden, with 470,000 people, is centrally located in Scandinavia. By car, it takes about three hours to Oslo, five to Stockholm and three to Copenhagen. The city is located where the river Göta Älv runs out into the sea on the west coast, right in between the provinces of Halland in the south and Bohuslän in the north. Gothenburg has always been an important port and the importance of the harbor is still evident. The Gothenburg Harbor is today one of the biggest in Europe, with 12,000 ships and four million ferry passengers every year. But the city has also become industrialized and is home to many multinational corporations, with Volvo probably the most widely recognized.

Brief History

The Swedish **King Gustav II Adolf** was only in his early 20s when he stood on a hill, pointing down toward what is now Gothenburg and said that this was where he wanted the new city to be built. That moment, in 1619, is what the bronze statue on Gustav II Adolfs Square in downtown Gothenburg commemorates. The story may or may not be true, but it was imperative for the king to establish a functioning, well-protected city on the west coast for trading, especially since Denmark controlled **Öresund** and charged tolls on ships entering the Baltic Sea.



1. Folkteatern
2. Skansen Kronan, Skansparken
3. Haga Kyrkan
4. Röhsskamuséet
5. Vasa Kyrkan
6. Stadsteatern, Konstmuséet
7. Bussterminal
8. Katolska Kyrkan
9. Stora Teatern
10. Kungstorget
11. Domkyrkan
12. Lilla Torget
13. Historiska Muséet
14. Börsen
15. Kronhuset
16. Göteborgs Operan
17. Centralstationen
18. Drottningtorget, Post Office

NOT TO SCALE

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King Gustav II Adolf

In the early 12th century, the most important Swedish port on the west coast was **Lödöse**, a little farther up Göta Älv. Since Norway controlled Bohuslän, they set up **Bohus Fortress** in Kongahälla (Kungälv) and started to demand tolls just like the Danes in Öresund. Sweden put up with this for about 150 years before the regent Sten Sture finally moved the city west of Kongahälla. The new city was named **New Lödöse** and was located in what today is known as Gamlestaden in the eastern section of Gothenburg. When one problem was solved, the next one arose. The province of Halland (Denmark) was now a little too close for comfort and **Älvsborg Fortress**, at the mouth of Göta Älv, was built by the Swedes to protect the new city. King Karl IX moved the city even closer to the sea in the early 17th century and gave the city its current name. It was risky to move it but also necessary, as the river by New Lödöse was too shallow to accommodate the bigger ships. King Karl's city was located on Hisingen and maybe it still would have been there today had it not been burned down by Danish troops just a few years after it was built. Officially, Gothenburg was not declared a city until 1621, three years after Gustav II Adolf decided where it was to be built on the southern shores of Göta Älv.

The Dutch built the new Gothenburg, which is the city we see today. Holland was a powerful and influential country with a strong navy at that time. They also had skilled architects and engineers which King Gustav II Adolf wanted to take advantage of since Gothenburg was built on marshlands, similar to what the Dutch were used to. The Dutch were even encouraged to stay after their work was done to help make Gothenburg thriving city. In return, they received the best lots to build houses on, while the Swedish workers had to settle for the slum districts.

After 1658, when both Halland and Bohuslän had become Swedish, Gothenburg could establish itself as a dominant

center for trading on the west coast without having to worry too much about interference from its neighbors. New Elfsborg Fortress was also built, which helped strengthen the security.

The **Swedish East India Company** was established in the mid 18th century and controlled trading from the Far East. The merchandise, such as tea, silk and china, was valuable and the East India Company became prosperous. The city itself would also benefit from the profits and Gothenburg grew rapidly, establishing several big industries. That encouraged even more people to move here.

Orientation

The city center is quite compact, which makes it easy to get from one district to the next. A lot of people arrive at the **Central Train Station** or the **Nils Ericsson Bus Terminal**, both located in a northern section of town called **Nordstaden**. South of here, across the moat, is the area simply known as "Inside the Moat" (**Inom Vallgraven**). This is where you will find the main tourist office by the **Kungsportsplatsen Square**, famous for the statue of King Karl IX riding on his horse. The statue is known among the locals as Kopparmärra, meaning the copper mare (although it is a stallion).

Across the bridge from Kungsportsplatsen is **Kungsportsavenyn**, the most famous street in Gothenburg. **Avenyn** marks the center of the city and is filled with shops, restaurants, pubs and night clubs. It stretches down to **Götaplatsen Square**, which is guarded by a huge statue of Poseidon. The area around Götaplatsen is also the cultural center of the city, with museums, the City Theatre and the Concert Hall. The amusement park, **Liseberg**, and the two soccer stadiums are all in the same area of the eastern section of town toward the E6 Highway.

Vasastaden is a few minutes walk west of Avenyn. This is a popular area for students to hang out. At the two biggest institutions for higher education, **Gothenburg University** and **Chalmers Institute of Technology**, there are nearly 40,000 students combined. Keep walking west from Vasastaden and you'll get to **Haga**, the old town, with charming buildings and cobblestoned streets. It's also a popular

shopping area and has many nice cafés. South of Haga is **Linné**, an area where some of the most expensive and sought-after apartments are located, but also an area with some great restaurants.

Farther west, on the outskirts of the city center, is **Majorna**, which, along with Haga, is the most charming of all districts. Majorna is an old working-class area and the buildings here have a lot of character. Only poor people wanted to live here in the old days, but it is now one of the more popular neighborhoods. If you want to get away from the hustle and bustle around Avenyn and enjoy a more small-town atmosphere without leaving the city, then Majorna is for you.

Practical Information

Tourist Offices

There are two tourist offices in the downtown area. The main office is at **Kungsportsplatsen**; another in the **Nordstaden** shopping center. Both places are equally good. ☎ 031-612500.

THE GOTHENBURG PASS

The Gothenburg Pass can be purchased at the tourist offices and most hotels in the city. If you stay in town for at least a whole day and plan to enter museums, go on guided tours and use public transportation, this card can save you a lot of money. The card costs 175 kr/$19 for one day and 295 kr/$32 for two days.

Getting Here

By Plane

The **Landvetter International Airport**, ☎ 031-941000, is about a 20-minute drive from Gothenburg and is where most international flights arrive and depart. There are domestic flights to both Arlanda and Bromma in Stockholm, several

times a day, with SAS and Malmö Aviation. Skyways also operates to some of the smaller airports in Sweden. The **Gothenburg City Airport**, ☎ 031-926060, is in Säve, just a 10-minute drive north of the city. If you fly to Gothenburg with the no-frills airline Ryanair from London, Glasgow or Frankfurt, this is where you will land. Airport coaches will take you from the airports in Gothenburg to the Nils Ericsson Bus Terminal in the city.

By Train & Bus

The **Central Train Station** and the **Bus Terminal** (Nils Ericsson) are next to each other on Drottningtorget Square just a short walk from all the downtown shops, restaurants and hotels. **Swebus**, ☎ 0200-218218, operates from most Swedish cities to Gothenburg. There are direct trains from Oslo, Stockholm, Malmö and Copenhagen.

By Boat

The harbor in Gothenburg is huge. There are ferries from Denmark and Germany with **Stena Line**, ☎ 031-7040000, and from England and Norway with **DFDS Seaways**, ☎ 031-650650. To find out more, check page 37.

By Car

The **E6 Highway** goes along the west coast of Sweden all the way up to Norway. Driving from Malmö takes about three hours and the Norwegian border is only about 1½ hours away. From Stockholm you can either go north or south of Lake Vättern. The fastest is normally the southern route, which means you take the **E4 Highway** to Jönköping and, from there, follow the signs west to Gothenburg.

Getting Around

On Foot

With such a compact city center, walking is often the best choice, especially if the weather is nice. The city is set up well for pedestrians and most of the shopping streets are free from cars.

By Car

Traffic in downtown Gothenburg isn't too bad, but you have to put up with a lot of one-way streets and look out for trams and buses. If you don't know your way around, it can get tricky. Also be aware that traffic jams usually occur in rush hour on the E6 highway, so stay away from it if you can. **Parking** is expensive – around 20 kr/$2.20 per hour in most places downtown. The cheapest spaces near the city center are at Heden and Gamla Ullevi, both in the eastern section of the city.

❖ Taxi Companies

Taxi Göteborg, ☎ 031-650000

Taxi Kurir, ☎ 031-272727

❖ Car Rental Companies

Europcar, ☎ 031-947100, and **Avis**, ☎ 031-947330, operate at Landvetter Airport and have several offices in the city as well. As usual in Sweden, gas stations can be a good place to check for deals on car rentals.

By Tram

Gothenburg does not have a subway like Stockholm but the tram is a great form of transportation. Trams are better for the environment than buses and better for sightseeing than subways. The only downside is that they are a bit slow. You can get virtually anywhere in the city center with trams and I definitely recommend them whenever something is out of walking range for you. The central tram station is Brunnsparken near Nordstaden and tickets can be purchased on board. To check times and routes, go to the nearest tram stop or call ☎ 0771-414300, www.vasttrafik.se.

Did You Know? When the trams were introduced to the city in 1879 they were pulled by horses. It wasn't until 1902 that modern technology caught up and electricity was first used.

By Boat

Älvsnabben is the name of a boat that takes you up and down the Göta Älv River between Lilla Bommen and Klippan. It runs approximately every 30 minutes. Boats are also popular for getting around in the archipelago; see the *Sightseeing* section, page 76 for details.

Sightseeing

In the City

One good way to see a number of the city's sights is to walk along the Göta Älv River. Start by **Lilla Bommen**, for example, where many of the sightseeing boats depart (read more about those below in *Guided Tours*). Next to Lilla Bommen is the **Opera House**, built in 1994 and show at right, one of the most modern opera houses in the world. The interior is as interesting as the exterior and well worth a visit. Guided tours are offered in English, ☎ 031-108000. Just past the Opera House is the **Gothenburg Maritime Museum**, which claims to be the biggest floating ship museum in the world. It's worth visiting, particularly if you've never seen a real submarine from the inside.

Farther down Göta Älv toward the sea, about a 20-minute walk from the moat, is the **Klippan Cultural Reserve**, where the ruin of **Old Älvsborg Fortress** is located just below the grand Älvsborg Bridge. In the mid-16th century, this area was an important center of commerce, with salting-houses, glassworks and foundries, all conveniently located for all the incoming ships from the sea.

Gothenburg has several pleasant parks as well. **Slottsskogen** and the **Botanical Garden**, conveniently located near each other just south of the Linné district, are two of the best. Some of the attractions in Slottsskogen are the **Natural History Museum**, the **Children's Zoo** and the

Observatory. This park is also a great place to just go for a stroll and there are plenty of little cafés as well. The Botanical Garden, across the road from Slottsskogen, is a stunning park and the biggest of its kind in Sweden. Slottsskogen is always open and the Botanical Garden is open from 9 am until sunset. Admission is free at both.

Guided Tours

Börjessons (☎ 031-609670) is a company in Gothenburg that offers many guided tours around the city, most of them on water, and some on land. They are generally fairly inexpensive and, though you may not have the time or desire to do them all, I recommend trying at least one or two. Many of the boat tours start at Lilla Bommen, north of Nordstaden, except Paddan, which departs from Kungsportsplatsen. Bookings in advance for all tours are recommended, ☎ 031-609660. Following are three of the best tours offered by Börjessons.

❖ Paddan (the Toad)

Paddan is the most popular of the guided tours run by Börjessons, the tour company. This boat trip takes you through the old moat, canals and the harbor. The tour departs several times a day in the summer from Kungsportsplatsen, starting at 10 am. In this 50-minute trip, you'll get a much different view of the city than you will on foot and, at the same time, learn about the interesting history of Gothenburg.

❖ Around Hisingen

This Börjessons tour is a four-hour cruise around the big island, where the northern districts of Gothenburg are located. Hisingen is actually the fourth-biggest island in Sweden and the second-biggest on the west coast. Gotland and Öland in the Baltic Sea are by far the two biggest and only Orust, in the archipelago north of Gothenburg, is bigger in the west. The tour takes you through some beautiful scenery at the perfect time of day just before the sun goes down.

❖ The Elfsborg Fortress

Another Börjessons tour, this is one of the more popular places to visit and a vital part of the history of the city. The proper name of the fortress is actually New Elfsborg, since the original, located where the south end of the Älvsborg Bridge is today, was destroyed in the mid-17th century. The Danish conquered the old fortress twice and the second time in partic-

ular turned out to be costly for the Swedes. Sweden had to pay a ransom of 1 million kr to get it back, 75% of the total State Budget that year, which took several years to pay off. In 1653, it was decided that a new fortress would be built on the little island of Kyrkogårdsholmen at the mouth of Göta Älv. The old one was to be torn down. New Elfsborg has been open to the public since 1971 with guided tours daily in the summer. Take the ferry from Lilla Bommen, with several daily departures in the summer.

The Southern Archipelago

To get away from the city for a while and do some sightseeing, you don't have to travel far. On a sunny and warm summer day there is no better place near the city to spend an afternoon than near the ocean. Just take the tram (nr 11) to Saltholm, which is the end station. From there, you will get on a boat that takes you around to the little islands in what is called the Southern Archipelago. The ticket used for the tram ride is also valid for the boats and, if you have the Gothenburg Pass, you travel for free. The islands here are inhabited but no cars are allowed, so peaceful walks around the old fishing villages are possible.

Shopping

Nordstan, just a two-minute walk from the Central Station, is the biggest shopping center in Sweden. You can be sure to find just about anything you need in one of the 150 stores under the same roof. There is also a tourist information center in the building where you can get shopping vouchers and possibly save some money. While shopping malls are convenient, the best shopping in the city is found outside Nordstan. If you walk across the bridge to "Inside the Moat," you will find great shopping on streets like **Kungsgatan**, **Drottninggatan**, **Fredsgatan** and **Korsgatan**. **Avenyn** is always popular, but it's also an overpriced tourist trap. Instead, head over to **Haga**, the old town, with its interesting little boutiques in a fascinating atmosphere.

The Fish Market

Feskekörka means Fish Church (in Gothenburg dialect) and it does look like a church from the outside. The inside, however, looks just like a fish market, and that's exactly what it is. Feskekörka is on the Rosenlund Canal across from Haga.

Fish have been traded on this spot for centuries, even before "the church" was completed in 1874. Fishermen would bring in their catch and set up stands in the open air, but the residents in the area complained about the stench so a building had to be constructed for the market.

The fish market is popular with local residents and visitors alike. You can also enjoy a good lunch here at either the café or the restaurant. Despite its location right in the center of Gothenburg, Feskekörka can be a little difficult to find if you don't know exactly where it is. For some reason, there are not many signs indicating the place. Thankfully, any resident of the city knows where it is and can probably give you good directions. Feskekörka is open Tuesday-Thursday 9 am-5 pm, Fridays 9 am-6 pm and Saturdays 9 am-14 pm.

Adventures

On Foot

Liseberg is Scandinavia's biggest amusement park and the biggest tourist attraction in Sweden with over three million visitors every year. Gröna Lund, the amusement park in Stockholm, doesn't attract half that number of people and the second-most visited attraction in Gothenburg, Universeum, brings in 500,000, which gives you an idea of Liseberg's popularity. The park opened in 1923 and has more than 30 rides, including the steepest wooden rollercoaster in the world. If you are not in need of such adrenaline kicks, Liseberg is also one of the greenest amusement parks in Europe and a great place to walk around. You can also enjoy shows and concerts, which are held here frequently during the summer.

Liseberg is open every day in the summer, during weekends in late spring and early fall and closed in the winter, except around Christmas when they open again with a market that is really worth a visit. ☎ 031-400100, www.liseberg.se.

Universeum is the big building right next to Liseberg. Even though this museum of science opened in 2001, it is already the second-most popular attraction in the city after Liseberg. The museum can be enjoyed by everyone, but, to be honest, it's mostly for the kids. There are several sections, one with fish tanks where you can pet rays and look at sharks (just make sure you don't do the reverse). Another section features an interesting exhibition of "deadly beauties," including spiders, snakes and a frog that can kill a human with just a small quantity of its poison. The downside with Universeum is that it is quite expensive. It's understandable that the aquariums and other exhibitions are costly to maintain and 135 kr/$14 is what you have to spend to see them in the summer. Admission for children under five years of age is free. ☎ 031-3356450, www.universeum.se.

Places to Stay

Radisson SAS Scandinavia, Södra Hamngatan 59-65, ☎ 031-7585000. $$$$. Conveniently located near the train station, this is one of two Radisson SAS hotels in the city. The other one is on Kungsportsavenyn by Götaplatsen, but there is a remarkable difference in quality between the two. This one by the train station is by far the nicer one, with better rooms and a much better atmosphere.

Gothia Towers, Mässans Gata 24, ☎ 031-7508800, www.gothiatowers.com, $$$-$$$$. One of the biggest hotels in Scandinavia, just across from the biggest amusement park in Scandinavia, Liseberg, and a stone's throw from the main shopping areas. The hotel has 704 rooms, of which 11 are luxury suites. The views from the 23rd floor, where the restaurant is located, are incredible.

Spar Hotel Majorna, Karl Johansgatan 66-70, ☎ 031-7510700, $$-$$$. This is a cozy, comfortable and inexpensive hotel with good quality and

HOTEL PRICES SWEDEN	
For double room including taxes. For hostels with no double rooms, price is per bed in dormitory.	
$	Under 300 kr ($39)
$$	300-600 kr ($39-$78)
$$$	601-1,200 kr ($40-$156)
$$$$	Over 1,200 kr ($156+)

great value for money. The rooms have Internet connections and the hotel also features a sauna and gym. It's in Majorna, the district just west of the main shopping areas.

STF Hostel Slottsskogen, Vegegatan 21, ☎ 031-426520, $. Centrally located hostel in the pleasant Slottsskogen Park in the southwestern part of the city. The hostel is modern and clean and has a community room with a big TV.

Places to Eat

There are plenty of good restaurants and most of them are inside the moat, along Avenyn and in Vasastaden. When dining in Gothenburg, seafood is recommended and a must, at least once, before leaving the city. Saluhallen, the market hall, near Kungsportsplatsen, is a great place to go for seafood, both for shopping and dining. The fish, meat and vegetables here are always fresh and the prices are reasonable.

Sjömagasinet, Klippan Culture Reserve, ☎ 031-7755920, $$$$. One of the best seafood restaurants you can find but also really expensive. Located by the shore of Göta Älv near the Old Elfsborg Castle ruin.

Ojdå, Karl Gustavsgatan 9, ☎ 031-7014337. This restaurant, in Vasastaden, is in a basement, with a really nice atmosphere, serving a wide variety of great tasting food.

Dojan, Vallgatan 3, ☎ 031-7112410, $$. A good-value restaurant with excellent food.

Göta's Bar & Kök, Mariagatan 15, ☎ 031-122692, $$. Pizzas and à la carte options in a pleasant atmosphere, in the cozy district of Majorna.

Mykonos, Linnégatan 58, ☎ 031-145770, $$. This is a good Greek restaurant and, if it's too crowded, there are a few more in the same area.

RESTAURANT PRICES SWEDEN	
For one main course & a beverage, including taxes.	
$	Less than 75 kr ($10)
$$	75-150 kr ($10-$20)
$$$	151-200 kr ($21-$25)
$$$$	Over 200 kr ($25+)

Excursions to Bohuslän

With 3,000 islands, Bohuslän is known for its archipelago and attracts many tourists in the summer, particularly from Gothenburg. Bohuslän is the westernmost province of Sweden and fishing was for many centuries the main business.

The best way to get around in Bohuslän is by driving your own car, but there are buses leaving from Gothenburg frequently in the summer with many stops around the province. Despite the small size of the province, there is great variety in the landscape. You'll find beaches, archipelagos, fjords, mountains, forests and meadows if you explore the whole area, but most people stick to the coastline when they visit.

The seal is the official animal of the province and can sometimes be found sunbathing on the many small, barren islands in the archipelago.

Kungälv & the Bohus Fortress

Kungälv is the first city you will get to in Bohuslän, just a 20-minute drive north of Gothenburg. The majestic Bohus Fortress overlooks the river Göta Älv here in the outskirts of the city. The fortress was originally named Bagahus, after the island Bagaholm, but eventually the name would turn into Bohus – which is what gave the province of Bohuslän its name. It was built in the 14th century by the king of Norway for the purpose of controlling the Swedish trade to Lödöse farther up the river. Lödöse was the main west coast port in those days. At that time, the city's name was Kongahälla and it was right in the border zone between the two kingdoms of Sweden and Norway. After 1658, when the whole region fell into Swedish hands, the fortress lost its importance but it was still used as a prison, among other things, by the Swedish army.

The city center of Kungälv itself is also worth stopping by. This is a charming small town with plenty of shops, cafés and restaurants. The old section of town just south of the center is worth a detour.

- Contact information for the Bohus Fortress, ☎ 0303-239200.

Marstrand

Marstrand is a 25-minute drive, followed by a five-minute ferry ride, from Kungälv. From the E6 Highway, take the exit to Marstrand (Road 168). The island is car-free so, if you're driving, you'll have to leave your car behind when you take the ferry. If you're traveling directly from Gothenburg, buses leave frequently in the summer to Marstrand from the Nils Ericsson Bus Terminal.

Marstrand is the old fishing village that became one of the most famous centers for sailors and tourists on the west coast. Today, it's generally considered a ritzy and hip resort (sometimes called the Monte Carlo of the west coast) with expensive restaurants and hotels. Most of the activities are near the harbor and along the beach promenade, where pubs and cafés are lined up one after another. But don't forget to walk up the hilly cobblestoned streets and explore the rest of the village with all its colorful wooden houses. Walking along the shore around the entire island only takes about one hour and the guided tour of **Carlsten Fortress** should be part of your excursion.

- **Marstrand Tourist Office**, Hamngatan, ☎ 0303-60087.

The Carlsten Fortress was built as a prison in the mid-17th century by the prisoners themselves. Most of the inmates carried life sentences and one of them is still famous in Sweden. Lasse-Maja, as he was known, shown at right, had a striking talent as an actor and storyteller and would dress up in women's clothes to charm his audiences. He was eventually reprieved of his sentence and released in 1839 after 25 years in captivity. If the legend is true, he was released because he served King Karl XIV Johan an excellent meal. He would spend the follow-

ing years traveling and entertaining people until he died in 1845 at age 60.

It took 200 years to complete Carlsten Fortress and, ironically, in 1854, shortly after completion, King Oskar I decided that it was no longer suitable as a prison. Today the fortress is the main attraction in Marstrand, mostly thanks to the legend of Lasse-Maja.

- Contact information, ☎ 0303-60265.

Smögen

To get to Smögen, follow the E6 Highway north and take the exit toward Lysekil (Road 162) after about a one-hour drive. After six km, take a right on Road 171, which takes you to Smögen.

Smögen has long been one of the best-known villages on the coast, especially for its herring and shrimp fishing . Although fishing still plays a crucial role, tourism has now become equally important.

The **fish auction** is a fun event for visitors to observe. It takes place at 8 am, noon and 5 pm. The first auctions were held in 1919 in an attempt by the fishermen to earn a little more than they could get by selling through a middleman. Just as in the old days, bidding at the auction is never done verbally, but by gestures such as raising a hand or blinking. Fish can later be purchased by the public at the Fish Halls, where cod, mackerel, shrimp and crayfish are all fresh out of the ocean.

- **Smögen Tourist Office**, ☎ 0523-37544.

❖ Adventures in Smögen

The pier in Smögen is well known and just taking a walk along the harbor is an adventure. Stop at one of the cafés and watch the boats come in and out of the harbor. The **Fisher Cottage** just behind the pier is remodeled in 19th-century fashion and open to the public. Rent a boat to have a look around in the area or take the ferry out to Hållö, a little island and nature reserve just off the coast from Smögen. Hållö has a hostel, a café and an old lighthouse from the mid-19th century. For boat rentals, there are plenty of private people renting out boats in Smögen, so look around for signs. You can also check with the tourist office by the main square. Bathing in the ocean is popular and Vallevik is a nice area to go for a swim.

❖ Adventures on Water in Bohuslän

Seal Safari in Fjällbacka. Fjällbacka is a little village along the sea just north of Smögen, halfway to Strömstad. From here you can take the boat M/S *Mira*, which takes you out on a cruise to see the seals. The tour is only offered in July and early August unless you request in advance. Seals are curious animals and you will have a good chance to see them up close, especially if it's a sunny and warm summer day, when you will most likely see them sunbathing on the many skerries. The boat departs from Fjällbacka harbor at 7 pm and the tour lasts for about two hours. Tickets can be purchased at the tourist office in Fjällbacka, ☎ 0525-32120.

Kayaking in Grebbestad. Grebbestad is just a little farther up from Fjällbacka and has the perfect location for a kayaking tour in the archipelago. Kayaking is a good way to explore the archipelago whether you are a beginner or advanced. You can rent a kayak or canoe at **Kajakcenter** in Grebbestad for 300 kr/$33 per day and take a tour on your own. If you've never done any kayaking before, however, I would strongly recommend a course. It's not as easy as it looks. The course costs about 600 kr/$66 for a full day and includes spending the morning with an instructor learning the basics, and then taking the afternoon to explore on your own. You won't become an expert in a few hours but you'll get enough valuable tips to keep you afloat for the rest of the day and for future excursions.

- Contact **Kajakcenter Grebbestad**, ☎ 0525-10930 and 0708-109304. **Grebbestad Tourist Office**, ☎ 0525-10080.

The Koster Islands

Several ferries leave daily for the islands in the summer and, if you come to Strömstad by car, parking is free just outside the city. From there you can take a bus to the city center where the ferries depart. Call ☎ 0526-14364 for information. There are two islands. The northern one is the smaller of the two and has a dramatic landscape with great views, especially from the old lighthouse, which is still in use. The southern island is more tourist-adapted and you will find such options as restaurants and bike rentals there. South Koster also has a great viewpoint, at Valfjäll, near the wooden

church. There are boat transfers between North and South Koster, which are free.

❖ Getting There

Keep going north on the E6 Highway. Strömstad is near the Norwegian border but less than two hours from Gothenburg.

❖ Adventures on Koster

The Koster Islands are perfect for all kinds of outdoor activities. There are marked trails for hiking on the northern island, while biking is an excellent choice on the bigger south island. Diving and canoeing are also popular. The northern island is a great place for climbing as well.

Diving: Trident Divers in Långagärde offers gear rentals and courses in diving, ☎ 0526-20514 or 070-6539095.

Bike Rental: There are two companies in Kilesand on the eastern part of the south island, **Cykelservice** and **Klostergården Stugby**. An additional two are in the north of the island, **Sydkosters Cykel & Mekaniska Verkstad** in Ekenäs and **Långagärde**.

Places to Stay

There are several options if you are looking for cheap but comfortable accommodation in Bohuslän. The best places to start looking are the various tourist offices in the area; many of them have been listed in this chapter. A good website with information about rooms for rent and directories to all the tourist offices in the province is **www.vastsverige.com**. For northern Bohuslän, **www.edsten.com** is a really good comprehensive site.

Tanums Gästgiveri, Apoteksvägen 7, 45731 Tanumshede, ☎ 0525-29010. $$$$. This luxury inn has been around since the 1660s! Expensive place to stay but very modern and with high quality. There are a total of 27 rooms, of which two are suites. This establishment also has pool tables and a sauna as well as an excellent restaurant.

Hotel Smögens Havsbad, Smögen, ☎ 0523-668450, $$$$. This four-star hotel is by the sea just past the town. The hotel has 74 rooms and can accommodate over 200 guests. You'll also find a spa where you can relax and enjoy a massage.

Ekenäs Skärgårdshotell (Koster Islands), Klockaregatan 2, Strömstad, ☎ 0526-20250, $$$. On the east side of South

Koster, this hotel has 18 rooms, each with its own bathroom and balcony, with superb views of the Kosterfjord. They are open all year and in the summer the restaurant serves food on the sunny terrace. Bookings should be made well in advance.

Makrillen Hostel, Smögen, ☎ 0523-31565, $, is a reasonably priced alternative in an otherwise expensive area of the west coast. There are great ocean views even from the sauna.

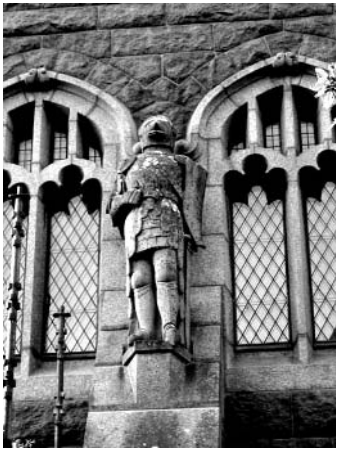
Places to Eat

Grebys Skaldjurscafé, Strandvägen 1, Grebbestad, ☎ 0525-14000, $$$. This restaurant specializes in seafood and has an excellent location by the sea.

Café Bryggan, Fjällbacka, ☎ 0525-31060, $$. A really good café right by the harbor.

Bergs Konditori, Marstrand, ☎ 0303-60096, $$. The place to go for a really good breakfast.

Excursions to Halland



Like its northern neighbor Bohuslän, Halland is a coastal province and all the cities are near the sea just off the E6 Highway. Instead of an archipelago, which is Bohuslän's trademark, Halland can boast some of the best sandy beaches in the country. The province is also famous for its salmon fishing in the four rivers – Viskan, Ätran, Nissan and Lagan.

The first city you will encounter on your way south on the E6 highway is **Kungsbacka** and just south of Kungsbacka on a little peninsula is **Tjolöholm Castle**, built between 1894 and 1904. The owner was a wealthy merchant named James Dickson, who unfortunately died from blood-poisoning after cutting his finger before his new home was completed. His widow, Blanche, moved into the castle and generously built a little village nearby for her employees to live in. Although the castle's architecture is rem-

iniscent of 16th-century England, Tjolöholm was extremely modern at the time it was built, with electricity and a central heating system. Vacuum cleaners were not too common in those days, but they had one at Tjolöholm, although it weighed one ton and had to be pulled by horses from outdoors. The vacuum cleaner and other interesting objects can be seen here every day during the summer. Guided tours are available. ☎ 0300-544200.

Varberg

Varberg is just 20 minutes south of Kungsbacka. In the 19th century, Varberg established itself as a health resort and is today the "spa capital" of Sweden. Seaweed was believed to have a healing effect when used in combination with a massage, and this popular technique is still used today. But people are not only attracted to the city for its spas; they also come for the long sandy beaches and festivities in the summer. The famous **Varberg Castle** is by the sea, just a two-minute walk from downtown, and right next to a beautiful building in Moorish style named **Kallbadhuset**, which has open-air baths and saunas.

Expect to pay about 800 kr/$88 for a treatment at one of the three spas in Varberg but you can get package deals and special offers when combining it with accommodation and meals. See *Places to Stay & Eat*, page 90, for detailed information about the spas in Varberg.

Did You Know? The word spa is an acronym of the Latin words *salus per aqua*, which means health through water.

- The **Varberg Tourist Office** is conveniently located right in the center of town by the Brunnsparken Square. ☎ 0340-43224.

The word Varberg comes from *ward*, which means guard, and *berg*, meaning mountain. Varberg Castle is at a place that used to be called Wardberget since it was a good spot to see approaching ships and possible enemies. If an enemy ship was spotted, a fire was lit on Wardberget to warn people. The first castle was built here in the 13th century by a Danish count who, accused of murdering the king, built it for protection. Swedish royalty also lived here on and off since Varberg

and Halland changed nationalities quite frequently in those days.

The castle we see today was built during the regime of Christian IV in the early 17th century. In 1645, shortly after it was built, the province of Halland fell into Swedish hands with the Peace Treaty of Brömsebro. Today, there's a museum in the castle depicting the interesting history of Halland which had such a crucial location for many years in the border region between the three Scandinavian countries. The two most interesting items in the museum were found by two local men in the 1930s. The **Bocksten Man** was a murder victim from almost 700 years ago, surprisingly well preserved thanks to the chemical composition in the soil. Supposedly, he is the only medieval man found with his clothes still intact. Perhaps even more interesting is the bullet that was used to kill King Karl XII at the 1718 battle in Norway that put an end to the Swedish glory days. The bullet is actually a brass button which, according to the legend, came from the king's own uniform. One of the Swedish soldiers found the button and brought it with him to his home outside Varberg, where he eventually threw it away. It was retrieved by a smith in 1932.

Falkenberg

Just south of Varberg, this is a typical summer town, which doubles in size in the tourist season. People come for the beaches and the salmon fishing on the river Ätran, which is said to have the most salmon of any river in Sweden. The city itself doesn't have anything special to offer, but a walk in the old section of town is worthwhile. The wooden houses from the 18th century and cobblestoned streets make for a pleasant walk. The **Falkenberg Tourist Office**, ☎ 0346-86100, is across the street from Stortorget, the main square.

Adventures on Foot in Halland

Hallandsleden is the trail that cuts through the entire province from north to south. It's marked clearly, either with blue signs and white text that reads "Hallandsleden" or with orange marks in the woods. Most of the trail is inland through the forest and is therefore ideal for those who want to get away from the busy beaches and cities. Except for the beaches, you'll see just about everything Halland can offer on this hike.

Adventures on Water

Halland has some of the best places for **windsurfing** in the country. The windy west coast south of Gothenburg is excellent for surfing. Varberg, with Apelviken, the bay just south of the city, is well known among surfing fanatics. **Surfers Paradise Surfcenter** in Apelviken, ☎ 0340-677055, rents out equipment and offers courses for beginners.

Kitesurfing, which is kind of like a combination of windsurfing and wakeboarding, has become more popular in the last few years. The advantage kitesurfing has over windsurfing is that it doesn't require as much wind and doesn't take up as much space. You fly higher up in the air and it's also much easier to jump and do tricks. Kitesurfing was patented in the 1980s and most early participants were windsurfers who wanted to try something different.

The downside with kitesurfing is that it's quite expensive. Equipment costs 10,000-15,000 kr/$1,100-1,600 (in Sweden). But if you want to try it out for a day, there's a kitesurfing school in Åsa, just outside Kungsbacka. Experienced windsurfers may feel comfortable enough to simply rent equipment and learn by trial and error on their own. For the rest of you, take the beginners' course, which lasts about four hours. The course starts with a video, and then it's off to the beach where you learn the basics of kitesurfing. You'll begin on dry land, then practice in the water without a board to get a feel for the wind. By the time the course is over you should be good enough to try on your own for the rest of the day.

- Contact Henrik Fahlén at **Mega Kite School**, ☎ 0708-110140 or henrik@kite.nu. Price, 1,495 kr/$160.

Good Kitesurfing Spots in Northern Halland:

- Rågelunds Camping in Åsa
- Björkängs Camping in Varberg
- Galtabäck in Varberg
- Apelviken in Varberg

To Keep in Mind When Kitesurfing:

- Never surf where people are bathing.

- Never attempt any jumps near land or rocks. It's easy to get reckless when you start to get the hang of it.
- Never surf when the wind is blowing strongly from the shore.

Åkulla Forest is just east of Varberg, a peaceful and lake-rich area perfect for **canoeing**. **Åkulla Friluftgård**, ☎ 0340-36057, offers canoe and boat rentals, as well as a restaurant and accommodations. It is on the Hallandsleden hiking trail.

Halland is famous for its **salmon fishing** and the rivers are some of the richest salmon waters in the country. There are four main rivers in Halland – Viskan, Ätran, Nissan and Lagan – and they are all well suited for salmon fishing. **Ätran**, which meets the sea as it passes through the city of Falkenberg, is often mentioned as the richest salmon water in Sweden. You don't need to walk far either and many are fishing from the bridges in downtown.

Sea fishing is also popular and is done virtually anywhere along the coast. Many of the best spots are near the cities of Falkenberg and Varberg. In Varberg, sea fishing is also arranged by the popular Fladenbåtarna. The price for a half-day is 380 kr/$40 and that includes all equipment. Cod, mackerel, catfish and ling are some of the most common fish in the sea.

- Contact **Fladenbåtarna**, Annedalsgatan 1, Varberg, ☎ 0340-14095 and 0340-12178.

On Wheels

❖ Biking

Ginstleden and Cykelspåret are two marked trails that stretch through the entire province. **Ginstleden** follows the sea all the way from Bohuslän to Scania, while Cykelspåret takes a detour and covers mostly the inner regions. Ginstleden would have to be considered the more scenic of the two, and you also have the advantage of passing through the four biggest cities in the province. **Cykelspåret**, on the other hand, takes you through forests, lakes, open fields and meadows. On Cykelspåret, you will notice that, despite its size, Halland has

a diverse environment. The trails are divided up into smaller sections and maps are available at tourist offices if you feel the need, but they are well marked at most intersections.

Renting a Bike

This costs 85-100 kr/$9-11 per day at any of the places listed below.

Kungsbacka/Varberg:

- Cykelfixarn, Onsala, ☎ 0703-559655
- Åsa Vandrarhem, Kuggaviksgården, Åsa, ☎ 0340-651285
- B F Cykelsport, Ö. Långgatan 47, Varberg, ☎ 0340-611255
- Cykelhuset – Fåglum, Birger Svenssons väg 14, Varberg, ☎ 0340-611060

Falkenberg:

- Cykelpunkten, ☎ 0346-12004
- Karlsson & Svensson Cykelaffär, ☎ 0346-10642
- Ätrans Turist, ☎ 0346-60495

Places to Stay & Eat

Varberg Kurort Hotel and Spa, Nils Kreugers väg, Apelviken, ☎ 0340-629800, www.varbergskurort.se, $$$. In Apelviken just south of downtown, this was ranked second-best spa in Europe in 2003 by the magazine *Professional Spa*. The hotel has 106 rooms and suites and is perfect for a relaxing day or a whole weekend.

Varbergs Stadshotel and Asia Spa, Kungsgatan 24-26, ☎ 0340-690101, www.varbergsstadshotell.com, $$$. This hotel is part of the Best Western chain and is in the main square of Varberg. The hotel also has a spa and offers special weekend packages.

Apelvikens Camping, Apelviken, ☎ 0340-14178, $$. By the sea just south of Varberg, this large campsite has eight cabins and 40 fully equipped apartments. A café, restaurant and amenities are all nearby, as are some of the best beaches in Sweden.

STF Hostel Åsa, Kuggaviksgården, ☎ 0340-651285, $$. This hostel offers dorm beds as well as single and double bedrooms for reasonable prices. It's right by the sea in Åsa, which is

south of Varberg on the way to Kungsbacka. All amenities and bike rental are nearby.

Fästningen Hostel, Varberg Castle, ☎ 0340-88788, $. This hostel offers dorm beds as well as single and double bedrooms for reasonable prices. It's right by the sea in Åsa, which is south of Varberg on the way to Kungsbacka. All amenities and bike rental are available nearby.

■ Scania

Scania (Skåne in Swedish) is the southernmost province of Sweden and is known for its flat landscape and cultivated areas. Still, the area has a high population density compared to the rest of the country. With a population of approximately 1.1 million people, there are 100 people per square km, compared to 19 for the entire country. The largest city in Scania is **Malmö**, with 270,000 inhabitants, followed by **Helsingborg**, **Lund** and **Kristianstad**.

Getting Here & Getting Around

By Plane

When traveling within Sweden, the main airport is **Malmö Sturup Airport**, ☎ 040-613 1000, which has direct flights with SAS from Stockholm/Arlanda. Malmö Aviation has connection to Stockholm's other airport in Bromma.

Although the Malmö Sturup Airport is international, the only direct international flights are from London, Frankfurt and Lithuania. By far the best way to get to Scania and other parts of southern Sweden when traveling is **Kastrup International Airport** in Copenhagen.

By Bus or Train

A train crosses the Öresund Bridge every 20 minutes. The train to Malmö Central Station takes 20 minutes from Kastrup Airport and 35 minutes from Copenhagen Central Station. A one-way ticket costs 85 kr/$9 and can be purchased inside the airport or on the train. Just follow the signs from the terminal.

There are also direct trains from Copenhagen to other cities in Scania such as Lund, Helsingborg and Kristianstad. Malmö also has daily connections with Oslo, Berlin and Hamburg.

Scania has 120 regional bus routes and over 50,000 people use them every day to get to all corners of the province. Buses can take you to virtually every town in Scania and are good supplements to trains.

Tip: The website **www.skanetrafiken.se** can be accessed in four different languages: English, German, Swedish and Danish. It contains everything you need to know about buses and trains to, from and within Scania. You can also call ☎ 0771-777777, Monday-Friday 6:30 am-8 pm, Saturday 8 am-6 pm, Sunday 9 am-6 pm.

By Car

From Denmark, drive across the Öresund Bridge (more information about the bridge under *Getting Around*, page 42).

From Gothenburg on the E6 highway to Malmö is less than a three-hour drive. From Stockholm it will take you about six hours to Malmö on the E4 highway.

By Boat

From Denmark to Scania there are two options: Helsingør-Helsingborg with Scandlines, HH-ferries and Sundsbussarna, and Copenhagen-Malmö with Rederiet.

When the Öresund Bridge was completed in the year 2000, traffic between Malmö and Copenhagen ceased temporarily but recommenced in June 2004.

From Norway, you can travel from Oslo to Helsingborg with DFDS Seaways.

From Germany, there is traffic from three cities to Trelleborg on the south coast of Scania. Sassnitz-Trelleborg (Scandlines)

Rostock-Trelleborg (TT-Line and Scandlines), Travemunde-Trelleborg (TT-line).

- **Scandlines**, ☎ 0410-650 00, www.scandlines.se
- **TT-Line**, ☎ 0410-561 88, www.ttline.com
- **HH-Ferries**, ☎ 042-19 80 00, www.hhferries.se
- **DFDS Seaways**, ☎ 042-26 60 00, www.dfds.no
- **Sundsbussarna**, ☎ 042-21 60 60, www.sundsbussarna.se
- **Rederiet**, ☎ 040-17 04 90

Österlen

Österlen is in the southeast corner of Scania and is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the country. It also attracts artists, musicians, politicians and other famous people. One of the reasons why it is so popular is the beautiful and diverse natural environment and the fact that there are no big cities.

Historically, this area has been inhabited by farmers, fishermen and fruit growers, but lately tourism has become a vital part of the economy. There are open fields, forests, national parks, villages, beaches and much more to discover.

Tomelilla

When you get to Tomelilla you will find yourself in the heart of Österlen. The town was founded in 1865. Before the city was built, there were seven farmhouses, one of which, **Byagården**, remains today and functions as a museum. It's right next to the beautiful city park and well worth a visit.

Ystad

Ystad

Ystad is on the south coast and has a big harbor with connections to Bornholm, Germany and Poland. It used to be the second-biggest city in Scania (only Malmö was bigger) and had the biggest harbor. Ystad is from the Middle Ages and even today has the feel of an old city. It is nice to

just walk around downtown and look at all the old streets and buildings.

Simrishamn

This is a picturesque town on the east coast with many old buildings. As in other old coastal villages in Scania, fishing was important and, during the 16th century, Simrishamn became the center of Österlen. The area between Simrishamn and Kivik is today known as a big fruit district with hundreds of thousands of fruit trees.

Kivik

Kivik is a small fishing village on the coast, famous for its market in the summer, the biggest in Sweden, with over 100,000 visitors. The village of Kivik is even more famous than Simrishamn for its fruit.

Getting Here & Getting Around

To get from Malmö to Tomelilla in Österlen takes just over an hour by train. Since Malmö has easy access to Copenhagen through the bridge and ferries, it's convenient even for travelers coming here from the international airport in Copenhagen, which takes just a few hours.

Animal Life

When walking in the forests in Österlen, chances are you will encounter many wild animals such as deer, foxes, badgers and numerous kinds of birds. If you are lucky, you could even come across elk and some wild boar. It's important that you not bother the animals so try not to go near any nests or dens. Österlen is well known for its many birds of prey. Ornithologists come from all over Sweden and even other parts of Europe to study the eagles, buzzards, hawks and kites. The kite is, in fact, the symbol for the city of Tomelilla. One of the reasons these birds like to come here is because it's easier for them to find food in the winter since the ground is rarely covered with snow in this part of the country.

Sightseeing

Stenshuvud National Park, along the coast just south of Kivik and 10 miles north of Simrishamn, is the essence of Österlen with its diversity of plant and animal life. The park, with

its 954 acres, was founded in 1986 in order to preserve the area. Apart from its flora and fauna, there are many historic monuments and remains to explore. The best views can be experienced from Mount Stenshuvud, with an elevation of 100 m/320 feet above sea level. From here you can see a large part of the Österlen coastline, to the south as well as the east. On a clear day you can even spot the island of Bornholm which, despite its proximity to Sweden, belongs to Denmark. (For more information about Bornholm, see the Denmark section, page 452.)

An interesting feature is the terraced rubble formed by the different shorelines over the past 13,000 years since the last ice age. A popular and highly recommended way of exploring this park is by hiking, especially since bicycling is not allowed in the area. There are several trails and guided tours can be provided on request. As in most national parks, the flora and fauna must not be disturbed and it's illegal to pick the flowers. Camping is not allowed and trailer and camper vehicles can't be left overnight. Fishing is allowed but only in the Baltic Sea.

- **Stenshuvud National Park**, Kivik, ☎ 0414-70882

Not far from Stenshuvud, in Kåseberga, lies a formation of stones known throughout Sweden as **Ales Stones**. This creation, 67 m/190 feet long and consisting of 58 stones in the shape of a ship, has an uncertain and mysterious history reminiscent of Stonehenge in England.

Nobody knows exactly when this monument was created but it was probably during the Viking Age or possibly even earlier. The function of the stones is also uncertain. The name *Ale* probably means sanctuary, shrine or temple and archaeologists today are almost certain that it was used for funerary rituals, since such procedures took place at similar types of monuments during the Iron Age. Fragments of cremated human bones and charcoal have also been found.

Others contend that it was used for astronomical calculations. An interesting fact that supports this theory is that at midsummer the sun sets at one end of the ship, facing north-

west, and it rises at midwinter on the opposite end, facing southeast.

Kåseberga is about 10 km/six miles southeast of Ystad. Ale's Stones is only a short walk from the car park in the village. It is possible to visit them year-round but guided tours are only offered during the summer.

- For information and booking: **Ystad Tourist Office**, ☎ 0411-577681.

Adventures

Ride on a Railway Trolley: The railway trolley was invented in the mid-19th century by a German named Karl Drais. This is called "dressin" (Dress-éen, with emphasis on -éen) in Sweden which some dictionaries translate as "inspection car" or "inspection trolley." This is because it was used for inspection, repair and maintenance trips along the railroad during the 19th century. As the years went by, the trolley was used less frequently and, while a few made it to museums, the majority went to the junk yard. There are also, of course, the ones used for tourists in some parts of the country, such as Österlen.

A railway trolley looks very similar to a regular bike but, instead of tires, it has wheels that are made to fit the railway tracks.

Riding a railway trolley is like riding a bike on the railroad, but it's much more fun than a regular bike and better exercise than riding on a train. There are two possible routes in this area. Between Tomelilla and Fyledalen, the trolley used is an original, while the ones used on a nearby connection between Sankt Olof and Gyllebosjö are replicas. The latter are a little better suited for families with children, as they have certain

improvements in construction. Both routes will take you through some incredible scenery and trolley riding is a great way to explore the natural surroundings of Österlen.

The Tomelilla-Fyledalen route covers a distance of 12 miles round-trip and trolleys are rented in four-hour shifts, which gives you plenty of time. There are two options – either start at 9:30 am and return at 1:30 pm or start at 2 pm and return at 6 pm. The cost is 100 kr/$10.70 per person with two persons for each trolley. A child (age two-six) accompanied by an adult pays half-price and travels for free if accompanied by two paying adults.

The starting point is by the railroad crossing at Road 11 in Tomelilla (the main road that takes you from Ystad to Tomelilla). You can spot the tracks from the road before you get to the crossing. A car park is available nearby.

For bookings, ☎ 0417-10252. If you need to cancel, call no later than 8 am, as this makes it possible for people without bookings to go that day by calling the same number between 8:10 and 8:20.

TIPS WHEN RIDING THE TROLLEY

When you ride the trolley you will cross several roads. Always yield. When you come to a "Stop" sign, lead the trolleys across the road, one at a time, to prevent accidents. Should a meeting of two trolleys occur, it's the one traveling downhill that has to stop and let the other one through. When taking a long break, simply lift the vehicle off the tracks, allowing others to pass. Never leave it unattended as accidents could occur. Always adjust your speed so that you and others travel in a safe manner and remember that any damage to the trolley due to carelessness or negligence will result in a fine.

Paragliding: Kåseberga, the little fishing village in Österlen, is one of the most popular places in Sweden for paragliding. By now, you are aware that Österlen has some beautiful scenery and here's your chance to catch it all at one time from a bird's-eye view.

The first paragliders were some parachute fanatics who wanted to try something new and tried to jump with parachutes from ski slopes in the French Alps. The design of the chute would later change somewhat, leading to a sport with larger wingspans and thinner fabric.

There are two ways to get up in the air. You can either start on a slope such as a ski slope, or start from flat ground with some kind of man-made help, for example an engine. In this part of Scandinavia the terrain is pretty flat, which is not necessarily a disadvantage. With winds changing directions frequently, the advantage of starting on flat ground is that you can decide what direction you want to begin. It is also more convenient for beginners to start with a little extra help, either using an engine or being towed.

In order to get yourself up in the air on a slope, all you need to do is start running downhill. With a favorable wind it usually doesn't take more than a few steps. Once airborne, the hard part is over. The paragliding chute is constructed in such a way that it always goes in a forward motion with you underneath it. Landing is done into the wind and under normal conditions it's a piece of cake as winds will break the speed and push the chute up a little just before you approach the ground.

Do not try to start by jumping off a cliff as the chute is not designed for this. It will open too quickly and will at best hurt you and at worst get torn apart!

- **Sky Adventures**, Ales väg 5, Löderup, ☎ 0411-527478, www.skyadventures.se. This company has been around since 1989 and has some of the most experienced instructors in the country.

Places to Stay & Eat

Karlaby Kro, Tommarp, ☎ 0414-20300, $$$$. Expensive but a good restaurant inspired by Scanian and Mediterranean gastronomy. The hotel has an indoor swimming pool and sauna. It's near Simrishamn.

Brösarps Gästgifveri, Albovägen 21, Brösarp, Tomelilla, ☎ 0414-73680, $$$$. This restaurant comes highly recommended by several gastronomic associations. It also has accommodation. Handicap-friendly and open all year.

Kronovalls Slott, Fågeltofta, Tomelilla, ☎ 0417-19710, $$$. Castle with both hotel and restaurant – known for its wine tasting. Packages available offering food, accommodation and wine tasting.

Ystad Saltsjöbad, Saltsjöbadsvägen 6, Ystad, ☎ 0411-13630, $$$. Hotel and restaurant right on the beach surrounded by sand and forest. Modern and open all year.

Österlens Hotel, Smedstorpsvägen 29 Hammenhög, ☎ 0414-440850, $$. Centrally located on Österlen. Everything is within reach. Five miles to beach.

Kivik Hostel, Tittutvägen, Kivik, ☎ 0414-71195, $. Cheap but comfortable in a picturesque area, with breakfast available. Open February 7-November 7.

Malmö & Lund

With two of the three biggest cities in Scania here, this region in southwestern Scania naturally has much to offer. Malmö, Sweden's third-biggest city, with 270,000 people, has gone from an industrial town in the early and middle part of the 20th century to a modern city that links Sweden with the rest of Europe. Lund, just 15 minutes northeast of Malmö, has 100,000 people, is the oldest city in Scania – mostly famous for its university and its cathedral from the 12th century.

Getting Here & Getting Around

Crossing the bridge from Kastrup Airport in Copenhagen to Malmö Center only takes 20 minutes and, once you get there, there are good communications to other parts of southwestern Scania. The airport shuttle takes you from Sturup Airport, southeast of Malmö, to downtown Malmö in 40 minutes for 70 kr/$7.50. Lund also has easy access to the Sturup Airport with buses arriving and departing near the cathedral right in the heart of Lund.

Train is the best way to travel between Malmö and Lund. It takes you from one city center to the other in only 15 minutes.

To get around in Malmö is easy. The downtown area is fairly compact and most attractions are within walking distance. The city is set up well for walking, with many pedestrian areas. Bicycling is also popular, though not as much as in Lund where every inhabitant, especially the students, seems to ride a bike. As in most big cities in Sweden there are several bus lines to take you around Malmö (see the *Sightseeing* section) and, if necessary, reliable taxi services. A taxi from the airport costs 250-300 kr/$27-32, but always demand a fixed price before getting in.

- **www.skanetrafiken.com** has information about buses and trains to, from and within Scania. Check times and book tickets. Available in English, Swedish, Danish and German.

❖ Taxi Services in Malmö-Lund:

Taxi Skåne, ☎ 044-330 330
Minitaxi, ☎ 044-979797
Taxi Kurir, ☎ 040-70000
Limhamns Taxi, ☎ 040-130000

Malmö

❖ Brief History

There used to be two villages, one referred to as Upper Malmö and the other as Lower Malmö. The latter, closer to the sea, would later become the city of Malmö. Exactly when this happened is uncertain but the earliest written document we have mentioning Malmö as a city is from 1275. During the Middle Ages, the city was prospering, mostly thanks to large quantities of herring, which became the most important part of trading. The importance of the Hanseatic Cities (trading cities) in Germany decreased, which helped Malmö to establish itself as a center of trading. At that time, southern Sweden still belonged to Denmark and Malmö was its second-biggest city, with about 5,000 people.

Toward the end of the 16th century, business and population growth would stagnate and things got even worse when Den-

mark lost Scania to Sweden at the Peace Treaty of Roskilde in 1658. Malmö had now gone from a central part of Denmark to an isolated city without much significance in the south of Sweden. Malmö still maintained its position as a city of commerce but all the wars that were now taking place between Sweden and Denmark slowed down trading significantly.

The tough times would pass and a big part of that change was the expansion of the harbor in the late 18th century. In the 19th century, railroads would expand in Sweden as well, which led to a steady increase in population and Malmö would yet again become an important place for trading. From 1850 to 1915, the population jumped from 13,000 to over 100,000 and in 1870 Malmö became the third-biggest city in Sweden, a title it has held ever since. It was also during the 19th century that Malmö would transform itself into an industrial city. Importing of goods increased thanks to the bigger harbor and introduction of the railway system. Throughout the 20th century, Malmö's industrialization would mold its social character and influence the political system, as the Social Democratic party (working class party) ruled the city from 1919-1985.

❖ Shopping

Malmö is a perfect place for shopping, with its compact center and pedestrian streets. It has the relaxed atmosphere of a small town but the amenities of a big city. There are approximately 800 shops and over 300 cafés and restaurants, most within reasonable walking distance of each other. The main shopping areas are around three main squares named **Stortorget**, **Lilla Torg** and **Gustav Adolfs Torg**. If you continue down toward Triangeln on Södra Förstadsgatan, one of the main shopping streets in the city, then on to **Möllevången**, you will find diverse stores and markets with foods from all corners of the world. Some of the shopping malls include **Hansa**, **Triangeln** and **Caroli City** – all in the city center. The biggest shopping center is **Mobilia** just outside the city, easily accessible by bus.

Shops are open every day, on weekdays generally 10 am-6 pm, Saturdays 10 am-3 pm and Sundays 12 am-4 pm. On the last Saturday of every month, stores are open longer than usual.

Instead of closing at 3 pm they close at 5 and most have special offers. Look for signs that say *rea* (sale) or *erbjudande* (offer). There is also usually entertainment on the streets.

Tip: Take the road less traveled and explore a little on your own by getting away from the main shopping areas and into the little side-streets. Most of the best values, especially in design, can be found here. One of these places that few tourists discover is **Davidshalls Torg**, on one of the side-streets of Södra Förstadsgatan. This is a tranquil square with cozy cafés and shops. If you can't find it, many of the other side-streets will take you to similar areas with interesting little shops.

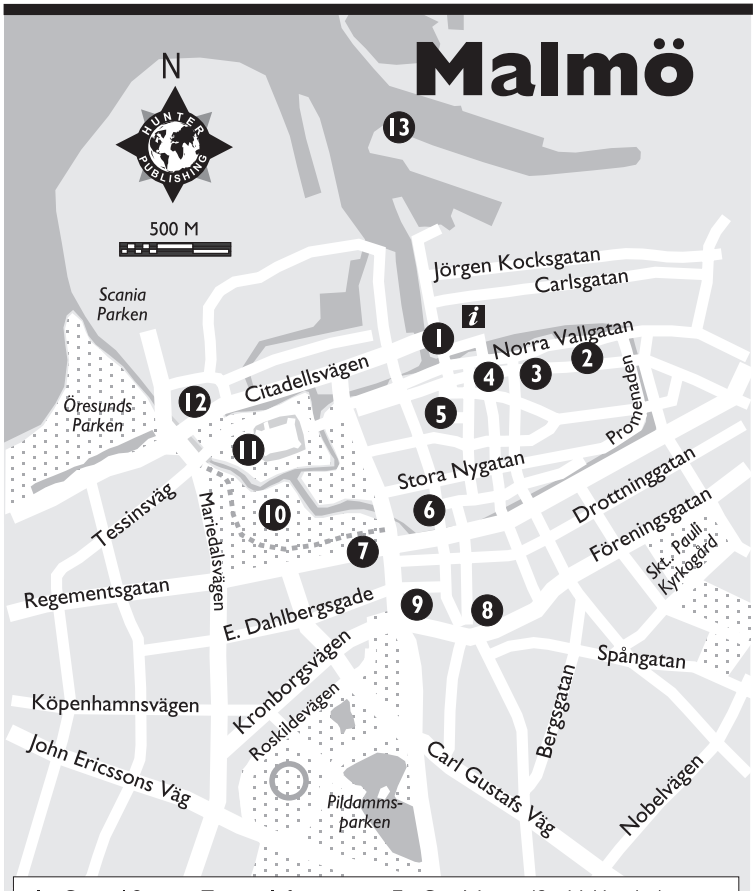
❖ Sightseeing

The Parks

Malmö is known as "the city of parks" (at least among its own people), and for good reasons. There are plenty of parks and many are well worth visits. Three of the most famous parks in Malmö are Kungsparken, Slottsparken and Pildammsparken. These are all right in the center of Malmö and therefore easy to find.

Kungsparken (King's Park), next to Malmöhus Castle and Malmö Museums, is the oldest park in the city and was originally named Kung Oskars Park after the king. It was built in the late 1860s and early 1870s on grounds that belonged to Malmöhus Castle. As the castle's significance diminished in the mid-19th century, it was decided that a park should be created instead. Today, the meandering channel running through the park is surrounded by huge trees of all sorts and the lawns invite visitors to sit or lie down and enjoy the tranquility while watching the occasional canoe or pedal boat pass by on the channel.

Slottsparken (Castle Park) is adjacent to Kungsparken and was used as a training ground for the military before it became a park. When the regiment moved to a different loca-



1. Central Station; Tourist Information; Canal Tour Boats
2. Carriage Museum (*Vagnmuseet*)
3. *Caroli Kirke*
4. St. Peters Church (*Skt Petri Kyrka*)
5. Stortorget: Jögen Kock's House; Governor's Residence; City Hall (*Rådhuset*), *Kompanihuset*; *Apotek Lejonet*
6. *Gustav Adolfs Torg*
7. City Library (*Stadsbiblioteket*)
8. *Triangeln*
9. Malmö Music Theater & Malmö Theater of Drama
10. Castle Park; Castle Mill; King's Park; Malmö Casino
11. Malmöhus Castle
12. Technology & Maritime Museum; Fishermen's Huts (*Fiskehoddorna*)
13. Harbor Park (*Hamn Parken*)

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tion at the end of the 19th century the city made a deal with the government and received a big chunk of land. In 1900 Slottsparken was inaugurated. In the summertime, the park attracts many people because of its open spaces suited for all

kinds of outdoor activities. Others like to take a walk along the edge of the big pond and observe the diverse bird life.

Pildammsparken, founded in 1914, is the biggest of all the parks and a popular place year-round. Besides its popularity in the summertime with beautiful trees, an active bird population and ponds, it gets more visitors in the winter than other parks, especially joggers and pedestrians. On cold winters (not too common in this part of Sweden), the big ponds that were once used as water reservoirs for the city become popular for skating. Pildammsparken has a bird house on the property with parrots, finches, peacocks and more. To find the bird park, just listen for the birds, especially the peacocks, which have a unique high-pitched voice. The "flower path," with over 10,000 flowers planted every year, is also a must to visit in the summer.

❖ Cultural Adventures

Malmö Museums

If you ask someone on the streets for directions to "the museum," make sure you know which one you are asking for as there are plenty to choose from. The one that will most likely come to mind is the Castle, which is part of a network called Malmö Museums. It was voted Museum of the Year in 2002 and is open all year.

Malmöhus Castle, the centerpiece of the museums, is the oldest preserved Renaissance castle in Scandinavia. It is from the mid-16th century and was where the Danish kings used to stay when they visited the city. The castle became important in the battles between Sweden and Denmark especially after 1658 (Roskilde Peace Treaty). It was later used as a prison from 1828 to 1909. Malmö Museums was founded in 1841, but Malmöhus Castle did not become a part of it until 1937. The Art Museum, the City Museum and the Natural History Museum are all here, along with an aquarium and a tropicarium.

The **Technology and Maritime House** and the **Commandant House** are right around the corner from the castle, all next to Kungsparken and Slottsparken in downtown Malmö. The Technology and Maritime House is an interesting museum containing trams, steam engines, cars, airplanes

and much more. You can even climb into a real submarine. Open Monday through Sunday from 12 am until 4 pm (from 10 am in the summer). Admission: 40 kr/$4.50.

There are three more museums in the city that belong to Malmö Museums as well: **Fiskehoddorna** (fishing cottages) by Banerskajen, **Vagnmuseet** (carriages, carts and other vehicles) at Drottningtorget and **Ebbas Hus** (private home from the 1910s) on Snapperupsgatan 10.

❖ Malmö on Foot

An organized guided walking tour (only available in English for groups of 10 or more) takes you through different parts of the city where you learn about the history and how it was to live in Malmö in the past. The tour starts at the St Petri Church in central Malmö (five minutes from Central Station) and takes approximately two hours. Contact: **Malmö on Foot**, Ola Hanssonsgatan 3A, 21759 Malmö. ☎ 040-6302560, www.malmobyfoot.com.

❖ Adventures

On Wheels

Bus Tour: The bus is a great way of seeing the city and Bus Number 20 in Malmö will take you around the whole downtown area. The buses on this line are not sightseeing coaches but will stop at several landmarks and interesting places, for example Malmöhus Castle, the popular beach Ribersborgsstranden, the Stadium and Pildammsparken. You can access this line from the Central Station or Gustav Adolfs Torg, among many places.

On Water

Channel Boat: With its proximity to the sea and a channel that runs through it, Malmö might actually be best explored on water. Guided tours are offered in the summer in Swedish, English and German. The boat will take you through the channel under 19 bridges and provide some beautiful scenery, including the famous parks. The tour takes 45 minutes and departs from the dock outside the Savoy Hotel near the Central Sta-

tion. Boats depart every hour on the hour between the hours listed below and more frequently during high season. It's a good idea to call first as these times can change and trips are sometimes cancelled due to bad weather. Prices: adults 75 kr, children (six-16 years) 40 kr. Special discounts: two adults + two children, 210 kr; one adult + two children, 135 kr. For more information and bookings, ☎ 040-6117488 or visit www.rundan.se.

CHANNEL BOAT DEPARTURES	
April 24-June 24	11 am-4 pm
June 26-August 22	11 am-7 pm
August 23-September 19	11 am-3 pm
September 20-October 3	12 noon and 2 pm

Canoeing: An alternative to the channel boats is to rent a canoe. This can be done at the **Malmö Kanotklubb** where you can rent one for a few hours or the whole day for reasonable prices. A good idea is to bring some food and stop somewhere along the way to have lunch and enjoy the environment. Malmö Kanotklubb is in the city center opposite the Museum of Science. Prices: one hour 70 kr/$7.50, one day 200 kr/$21. Paddle and life jacket included. Special seats for the disabled can also be provided. Contact information: Malmö Kanotklubb, Malmöhusvägen, Malmö, ☎ 040-972047.

❖ Places to Stay

Hotel Mäster Johan, Mäster Johansgatan 13, 21121 Malmö, ☎ 040-6646400, $$$$. All rooms are doubles, very spacious and with furniture of the highest quality. The hotel has won numerous awards for its outstanding and consistent quality.

Hilton Hotel, Triangeln 2 Malmö, $$$. Rooms are spacious with great views

HOTEL PRICES SWEDEN	
For double room including taxes. For hostels with no double rooms, price is per bed in dormitory.	
$	Under 300 kr ($39)
$$	300-600 kr ($39-$78)
$$$	601-1,200 kr ($40-$156)
$$$$	Over 1,200 kr ($156+)

of the city and the Öresund Strait. There is also ample parking in the hotel's own underground parking lot underneath the hotel.

Hotel Formule 1, Lundavägen 28, 21218 Malmö, ☎ 040-930580, $$. This inexpensive hotel next to the E6 Highway is perfect for the budget traveler and has surprising comfort and cleanliness for the price you pay. Rooms are equipped with a sink and TV but bathrooms are shared.

❖ Places to Eat

There are two main areas for food, Lilla Torg and Möllevången. **Lilla Torg** is a square surrounded by cafés, pubs and restaurants where a lot of locals meet for lunch or dinner. There is a market hall at one of the corners of the square with lots of restaurants as well. The great thing about Lilla Torg is the diversity – you will find any type of food in every price range here.

Möllevången has a high population of immigrants. There are numerous stores and restaurants selling and serving food from dozens of different countries and cultures in the world. In the summertime, Möllevångstorget (the square and central point) has the biggest market of fruits, vegetables and flowers in the city. Besides the huge supply, you will also find that prices are a bit cheaper here compared to other stores and restaurants in Malmö.

Salt & Brygga, Sundspromenaden 7, Malmö, ☎ 040-6115940, $$$$. Awarded "restaurant idea of the year" in 2001, certified as an organic restaurant with food influenced by Scania and the Mediterranean, with an incredible view over Öresund. Non-smoking.

Mello Yello Bar & Restaurant, Lilla Torg 1, Malmö, ☎ 040-304525, $$$. Popular place at Lilla Torg, especially in the summer.

RESTAURANT PRICES SWEDEN	
For one main course & a beverage, including taxes.	
$	Less than 75 kr ($10)
$$	75-150 kr ($10-$20)
$$$	151-200 kr ($21-$25)
$$$$	Over 200 kr ($25+)

Krua Thai, Möllevångstorget, Malmö, ☎ 040-122287, $. Good and popular place for Thai Food. Reasonable prices.

Lund

❖ Brief History

Lund, founded in 1020, is the oldest city in Scania and was actually the biggest city in Scandinavia for a while in the 12th century. At that time, the church had tremendous power and, since Lund was where the archbishop lived, the city became the heart of Denmark. It was also during the 12th century that a wall, over two miles long and eight feet high, was built to keep enemies out. Today you can still see remains of the wall when walking around in the city center. While Malmö was prospering during the Middle Ages, Lund was struggling. Floods, diseases, fires and uprisings dominated this era. Some uprisings came from the powerful and highly influential bishops trying to take away all power of the king.

Eventually, however, the church would lose its power altogether in 1536 during the Reformation in Denmark. As a result, most churches in Lund were torn down. In 1658, things went from bad to worse as Lund became Swedish in the Peace Treaty in Roskilde. Battles were fought between the Danes and the Swedes, with many casualties, and in 1678 the Danes decided that, since they were not going to keep the city, they might as well burn it down. About half the houses in Lund were burned to the ground and the city had now reached rock bottom.

But just like Malmö, Lund would once again flourish and it was the introduction of the railway system that made it happen here as well, with industrialization and the resulting increase in population. Lund was no more than a village in the mid-19th century; today it is the third-biggest city in Scania, with 100,000 people.

One good thing came out of the peace treaty in 1658 and that was the founding of the university a few years later.

Did You Know? The oldest church in Sweden today is **Dalby Church**, built in the 11th century, and just outside Lund.

❖ City Life

The university makes the city special compared to most other cities in Sweden. It shapes the lifestyle in Lund. The only other city in Sweden that can compare is Uppsala, north of Stockholm. Lund's university was founded in 1666, in an attempt to establish a center for education in the newly conquered provinces of what is now southern Sweden. It is the second-oldest university in Sweden (Uppsala has the oldest), and one of the biggest institutions for higher education and research, with seven faculties, a research center and other colleges. There are more than 34,000 students studying 60 different programs and about 850 different courses. The university also has around 6,000 employees.

One thing that epitomizes Lund and makes it different from other cities in Scania is the number of bikes, most of which belong to students. As soon as you leave the train station you will see hundreds of them lined up. With such a compact city center and a campus where everything is within short distances, there is no real need for cars unless you travel outside the city limits.

Bike Rentals

Godsmagasinet, Bangatan, ☎ 046-355742, Open Monday-Friday 6:30 am-9:30 pm.

Returhuset, Klosterängsvägen 11, ☎ 046-2118711.

The Lund Tourist Office, Kyrkogatan 11, ☎ 046-355040, is directly across from the Cathedral.

❖ Shopping

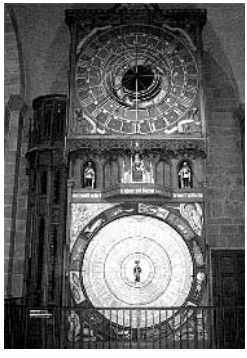
Lund sometimes markets itself as "the little big city." This makes for ideal shopping as the city has a great supply of stores and basically everything within easy walking distance. Because of its small center and many narrow cobblestoned streets, walking or cycling is a much better way of getting around than by car. Most shops are around **Mårtenstorget** and **Stortorget**, which is also where you will find most cafés and restaurants. There are more than 100 pubs cafés and restaurants in the city. Opening hours for shops in Lund are 10 am-7 pm on

weekdays and 10 am-1 pm (sometimes 2 pm) on Saturdays. On the first Saturday of every month, except in July and August, most shops stay open until 5 pm.

❖ Sightseeing

The Cathedral: The Lund Cathedral is one of the most famous buildings in Sweden and the largest and most beautiful example of Romanesque architecture. It's easy to find as it's right in the city center next to Stortorget, just a five-minute walk from the train station. In case you get lost, look for the two towers of the cathedral, which can be seen from many places in the city.

Half a million people visit this landmark every year and about 80,000 of those come for the services that have been held here every day for almost nine centuries. When the cathedral was built in the 12th century, the church with its bishops was powerful. Choosing Lund as the location was logical since the bishop of Lund was appointed Archbishop of the whole Nordic Region around that time.



The towers have increased in height over the years since the cathedral was built and are now 55 m (180 feet). Although it is possible to walk all the way up to the top of the towers, they are not open to the public.

The Clock, at left, is one of the most famous attractions of the cathedral. Built around 1425, by a German named Nicolaus Lilienfeld, it can be used to make astronomical calculations. Only the top part of the clock is from the original. The bottom parts are copies, but the originals can be seen in the Cathedral Museum.

❖ Places to Stay

Grand Hotel, Bantorget 1, Lund, ☎ 046-2806100, $$$$, www.grandilund.se. Upscale and modern hotel, one of the best Lund has to offer. You will find top quality throughout the hotel and in their res-

taurant. Right in the center of the city just a few minutes' walk from the railway station.

Concordia, Stålbrogatan 1, Lund, ☎ 046-135050, $$$. www.concordia.se. This four-star hotel in the city center has a great atmosphere. The hotel is very modern and has 54 rooms with high comfort and tasteful design. All guests have access to free wireless Internet connection and the hotel is also suitable for disabled persons.

Hotel Ahlström, Skomakaregatan 3, Lund, ☎ 046-2110174, $$. Another centrally located hotel, but this one is for the budget traveler. Rooms are clean and comfortable and are available both with and without bathrooms. Breakfast is included.

Tåget Hostel, Vävaregatan 22, Lund, ☎ 046-142820, $. This hostel is located in a train ("tåget" means train) not far from the railway station. There are three sleeping cars with a total of 108 beds. There is also a washroom car with eight toilets, a café car where breakfast is served and a reception car for checking in and out.

❖ Places to Eat

Häckeberga Slott, Genarp, Lund, ☎ 040-480440, $$$$. Castle 13 miles southeast of the city with incredible surroundings. The cuisine at their restaurant is excellent and you'll find accommodation here as well. Open all year.

Stortorget, Stortorget 1, Lund, ☎ 046-139290, $$$. At Stortorget near the cathedral.

Saluhallens Fiskrestaurang, Saluhallen, Mårtenstorget, Lund, ☎ 046-126354, $$. Good fish restaurant in the Market Hall by Mårtenstorget. Reasonable prices.

The Northwest

Ven

Driving north from Malmö along the coast, you will reach Landskrona after about 20 minutes. The city itself does not have much to offer, but there is another reason to stop here. Just off the coast in the middle of Öresund is the island of Ven, which is a big plateau, with steep, almost vertical edges. The island has an interesting history and is the perfect size for an afternoon or perhaps even a whole day exploring. There's a daily ferry service from Landskrona and there is free car parking near the harbor. The boat takes you to the little port

on the southeastern end of Ven, where a tourist office and bike rentals are located.

The most popular way of getting around Ven is on a bike, but you can also take a bus, horse and carriage, or take the popular tractor and carriage to get around. Other popular activities on the island include hiking, bathing and fishing and there's even a nine-hole golf course called St Ibbs, which is quite good.

- **Bike rental:** Hvens Cykeluthyrning, ☎ 0418-72250

THE BRAHE LEGACY

The most historically significant man to live and work on the island was the famous Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe. Brahe was first in the world to create an observatory exclusively for the purpose of mapping the positions of the stars and orbits of the planets. He called this observatory Uraniborg, a beautiful castle, built in the late 16th century on the middle of the island. A few years later, Brahe built yet another observatory, this one underground, and he called it Stjärneborg. Uraniborg was destroyed in the 17th century but parts of Stjärneborg were found by archaeologists in 1950. Today, there's a multimedia display of Brahe's works in Stjärneborg which is worth seeing. There's also the museum and recreated Renaissance garden where Uraniborg stood. The museum is open every day from mid-April through September, 10 am-4 pm, and during peak season, 10 am-6 pm. Guided tours are offered but should be booked in advance. For information and bookings, ☎ 0418-72530 or 0418-473473.

Kullen

Kullen, the narrow peninsula in the northwestern part of Scania, with the nature reserve Kullaberg at the tip, attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors every year.

Höganäs is the biggest city on the peninsula and is famous for its pottery. The city itself is nothing to see, so keep going north along the coastal road until you get to the little town of **Mölle**, on the hillside almost at the tip of the peninsula. Initially, Mölle was just a regular fishing village but when celebrities started visiting in the late 19th century, Kullen became a popular destination. The railroad made a big contribution to its popularity as well and when the German emperor Wilhelm started visiting, a line between Berlin and Mölle via Copenhagen was established.

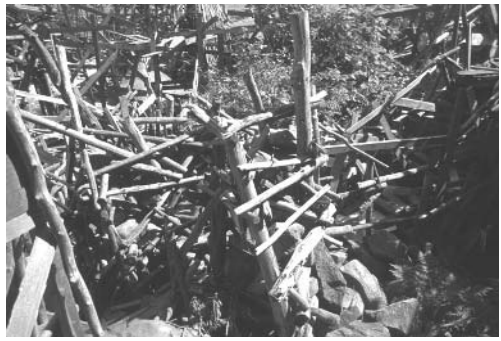
Mölle made a name for itself as the "city of sin" because both men and women bathed together at the beaches in the beginning of the last century. This sounds funny to us now but was considered taboo back then. Entrance to the nature reserve is just above Mölle, where an outstanding 18-hole golf course is located. At the tip of the peninsula, near the village, is the well-known lighthouse, where you can enjoy a spectacular view of Öresund and Denmark on your left and the Skälderviken Bay on your right. This is the brightest lighthouse in Scandinavia and can be seen from 50 km/30 miles away.

❖ Getting Here & Getting Around

Kullen has easy access to the nearby big cities in Scania and to Copenhagen. From the Kastrup Airport in Copenhagen it's only about a two-hour drive to Mölle at the tip of the peninsula, either across the bridge or by ferry between Helsingör and Helsingborg. If not traveling by car, you can take the train to Helsingborg and continue to Höganäs by bus (nr 220). From there, take bus nr 222 if continuing to Mölle.

❖ Sightseeing

Nimis and Arx: It was in 1980 that the artist Lars Vilks started putting pieces of driftwood together with a hammer and some nails. Little did he know how popular yet controversial his creation would turn out to be. **Nimis**, Latin for "too much," is on



Nimis

the northern shore of Kullaberg where Vilks could work for two years before anyone even knew about it. When someone finally discovered what he was up to, it was reported to the county council since it's illegal to build anything in the nature reserve without a permit. The case even went to the Supreme Court, where Vilks eventually lost and was fined. But Nimis remained, thanks to a person who bought it in 1984. Since then, there have been many court cases and Vilks has been fined again and again. Nimis has also been vandalized many times. People have used axes and chainsaws and even set it on fire twice. But the persistent artist, who has visited his creation more than 5,000 times, just kept rebuilding it.

Today, more than 30,000 people visit this work of art each year. It is over 150 meters/420 feet long, put together with 160,000 nails, and weighs 70 tons.

Arx, created in 1991, is another "work of art" by Vilks and consists of 150 tons of stone and concrete. His new creation, of course, led to even more fines for Vilks, who started numbering the pieces on Arx from 1 to 352 and, by doing so, turned it into a kind of book where each stone was a page. These "pages" were then sold to 300 different people who financed the fines.

❖ Adventures on Foot

Rock Climbing: Kullen is one of the best places for rock climbing in Sweden. The spectacular views of the sea from the steep cliffs, formed by the ocean over millennia, attract visitors from all over Europe. In fact, no other rock-climbing site in Sweden gets more visitors from abroad. Most foreign visitors are, not surprisingly, from nearby Denmark. There are actually many

more Danish climbers than Swedish in this area because of the flat terrain in their own country.

The rocks around Kullaberg are well suited for both advanced climbers and for beginners. There are more than 700 routes on some 50 cliffs to choose from. For climbers, Kullen is divided into two sections, the north coast and the south coast. The south coast is the easier side and more suited for beginners and families. Because it is south-facing, the sun also shines a lot more here, which makes it more pleasant on chillier days. The north coast, on the other hand, is much more challenging and therefore suited to advanced climbers looking for a little extra adventure. One of the most popular routes to climb is the one called "the Original Path," climbed for the first time in 1971. It's 20 m/60 feet high and considered a classic.

There is a restricted area on the eastern part of the north coast where it is strictly forbidden to climb between March 1 and July 15, which is the breeding season for birds.

Things to Keep in Mind

- Try to remain on existing paths at all times.
- Take all your garbage with you when you leave.
- Never bother any birds and especially not the ones who breed.
- Hammer bolts are not allowed and it is also prohibited to drill bolts into the mountain.
- When choosing an instructor, pick someone who is authorized and has plenty of experience both in climbing and teaching. **Magnus Nilsson**, Äventyrsskolan/Alpine Adventure, ☎ 042-332300, has over 30 years experience and has climbed at Kullen for the past 20 years. He has been an authorized instructor here since the 1980s.

❖ Places to Stay & Eat

Grand Hotel, Bökebolsvägen 11, 26042 Mölle, ☎ 042-362230, $$$$. An upscale hotel right in the center of Mölle. Both the rooms and the restaurant are of the highest standard. There are 42 rooms, many of which have balconies with incredible sea views. The hotel can also help with arranging various activities in the area.

Hotel Rusthållargården, Utsikten 1, 26043 Arild, ☎ 042-346530, $$$. Located in Arild, a short drive from Mölle, in beautiful and relaxing surroundings. There are saunas and Jacuzzis available to guests and you'll also find an award-winning restaurant. Open all year except Christmas and New Year.

Möllehässle Camping Stugby, Mölle, ☎ 042-347384, $$-$$$. A spacious campsite with a variety of good-size cabins available, sleeping up to eight people. Some of the cabins have their own bathrooms, TV and kitchen with standards similar to those of a hotel.

Höganäs Hostel, Kullagatan 135, Höganäs, ☎ 042-331700, $. Hostel with en-suite toilet and shower/bath (not all rooms). Open all year.

■ Blekinge

Blekinge is one of the smallest provinces in Sweden but, with 150,000 people, it's quite densely populated. On the southeastern coast of Sweden, Blekinge was the border zone between Denmark and Sweden before the Roskilde Peace Treaty in 1658 and it saw many battles between the two kingdoms. Shortly after Blekinge became Swedish, the cities of Karlskrona and Karlshamn, both named after Swedish kings, were founded to strengthen the naval power the country had at the time. When Blekinge belonged to Denmark, the area was extremely important as a supplier of timber. This was one of the reasons why the Danes tried fiercely to regain Blekinge for many years after 1658. The province has always been known for its many trees, and the oak tree, in particular, is a symbol for the province. The lush vegetation is the reason

why the people of Blekinge call their province "the Garden of Sweden."

Getting Here

By Plane

Ronneby Airport, ☎ 0457-659010, is centrally located in Blekinge, about 30 km/18 miles west of Karlskrona. There are daily connections with Stockholm through SAS, ☎ 0770-727727, and with Copenhagen through Swedline, ☎ 0495-249050. A bus is available for transport to Karlskrona and costs about 75 kr/$8.

By Train & Bus

Thanks to the Öresund Bridge there is a direct train from Copenhagen to Karlskrona via Malmö, which takes just three hours. For tickets and information, ☎ 0771-757575. **Blekingetrafiken**, ☎ 0455-56900, is the company that operates the buses in the province. There are connections between all the coastal cities and the fares usually cost about 65 kr$7.

By Boat

The harbors have always been important in this coastal province and there are daily ferry connections from Poland and the Baltic countries to Karlskrona. You can travel to and from Gdynia in Poland with **Stena Line**, ☎ 0455-366300, from the island of Verkö, just east of downtown Karlskrona.

By Car

The E22 highway goes through Blekinge, connecting the coastal cities, and can easily be reached in just two hours from Malmö or four hours from Stockholm.

❖ Car Rental Companies in Karlskrona

- **Hertz**, Borgmästarekajen 32, ☎ 0455-300246.
- **Europcar**, Blåportsgatan, ☎ 0455-388000.
- **Avis**, Gullbernavägen 16, ☎ 0455-311125.
- **Karlskrona Taxi**, ☎ 0455-19100.

Karlskrona

Karlskrona is the biggest city in the province and has an exciting and unusual history. Unlike most other cities, which grew slowly from village to city, Karlskrona was constructed on a little peninsula in eastern Blekinge by order of the king, Karl XI, in 1680.

King Karl XI had a vision when he founded the city in 1680. He had found the perfect location for his new naval base, centrally in the Baltic region, most of which he was the ruler of. There was, however, one man standing in his way and that was the farmer who lived on Trossö, where the city was to be built. The farmer, Vitus Andersson, refused to sell his land despite a generous offer by the king. The mighty king, realizing that negotiations could accomplish nothing, felt he had no other option than to imprison the poor farmer and Vitus was jailed in Karlshamn. After a few years in prison he was pardoned and even received some money (albeit a small amount) as compensation for his land.

At the time, Sweden had become a powerful country and controlled large parts of the Baltic Region, including Finland, the Baltic States and even parts of northern Germany. Karlskrona had the perfect location right in the center of this vast empire and grew to become the third-biggest city in Sweden by the mid-18th century, with a population of 10,000 people.

The city had its glory days in the late 18th century and even a big fire in 1790 couldn't put an end to that. Karlskrona and Sweden had the most prominent shipbuilders in those days, which was a big reason for the navy's success. The most

famous of all was a man named Fredrik Henrik af Chapman, who was the Admiral Superintendent of the Naval Dockyard in Karlskrona. But, as time went by, the navy lost much of its significance and, while the introduction of the railway helped so many cities in Sweden regain their strength, it had the opposite effect on Karlskrona. But that has started to change. Karlskrona has today a population of over 60,000 people and a prospering business climate, especially in the IT-sector. Even so, its importance as a naval city is still evident. The city of Karlskrona is also one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

- **Karlskrona Tourist Office**, Stortorget 2, 37134 Karlskrona, ☎ 0455-303490, www.karlskrona.se.

Karlshamn

Karlshamn has for centuries been regarded as a center for merchants, primarily for trading across the Baltic Sea, but also for domestic trading. The name Karlshamn means Karl's harbor, after the Swedish king Karl X Gustav. During the Napoleonic War, in the early 19th century, the harbor was a haven for smugglers while trading was prohibited. The harbor is still an important part of the city and is one of the 10 biggest in the country. Karlshamn is also known as an industrial town and has produced tobacco, snuff and alcoholic drinks such as schnapps and punch.

- **Karlshamn Tourist Office**, Ronnebygatan 1, 37481 Karlshamn, ☎ 0454-81203, www.karlshamn.net.

Ronneby

Ronneby is the oldest city in Blekinge, founded in the 13th century, and it was therefore the most important town for centuries. The city has seen two devastating tragedies, a bloodbath in 1564, in a battle between Denmark and Sweden, and a fire in 1864 that wiped out most of the buildings. Ronneby is still a pleasant city to visit, especially the area around the church that was spared from the fire. Today, the city is mostly famous for Ronneby Brunn, one of the biggest hotels and conference centers in Europe, and the river Ronnebyån, a popular place for fishing and canoeing.

- **Ronneby Tourist Office**, Västra Torggatan 1, 37230 Ronneby, ☎ 0457-18090 www.ronneby.se.

Sölvesborg

Sölvesborg is a small town in the western part of Blekinge and was for a long time the most important one in the province. The reason was the fortress, which also gave the city its name (borg means fortress). It was built in the 13th century and the town grew up around it. Sölvesborg still has a medieval feel, with narrow cobblestoned streets and wooden houses. A disastrous fire in 1801 made one third of the population homeless, but the town recovered and gained importance during the 19th century by producing and trading liquor.

- **Sölvesborg Tourist Office**, The City Hall, 29480 Sölvesborg, ☎ 0456-10088, www.solvesborg.se.

Kristianopel

This is the picturesque little town, sometimes known as "the village of a thousand roses," on the coast close to the border of Småland. Kristianopel was founded in 1599 and for about 60 years it was a city strategically located in the border zone between Sweden and Denmark. When Blekinge became Swedish in 1658 and Karlskrona was founded shortly after, Kristianopel went from an important city to a little village. Today, it looks like a typical fishing village, peaceful and charming, with a little harbor and old wooden houses. The only thing left from the Danish era is the church, but if you look around you can still see red and white flags on a few poles. The old town wall, built by the Danes, is also well preserved and reminds its visitors of Kristianopel's history. Many visitors stay here for several weeks at the popular camping site, but the 19th-century inn is also popular.

Sightseeing in Karlskrona

The city is built on 30 islands, with Trossö the main island. Trossö is where most of the historical and cultural attractions are and this is also where you will find most cafés, restaurants and hotels.

The main square in Karlskrona is one of the biggest in Europe. Despite its size, it's quite attractive, surrounded with beautiful buildings such as two churches and the Karlskrona City Hall, and with the statue of the city's founder in the middle. Perhaps it would have looked even better if parking were not allowed here, but I guess it would be foolish to waste all that space. The church with the two towers is the **Fredrik Church**, named after King Fredrik I. The **Church of the Holy Trinity** is also known as the German Church since it was built for the German immigrants who came to the city in the late 17th century.

The **Admiralty Church** down by the Admiralty Park is the biggest wooden church in Sweden but is perhaps more famous for the man standing in front of it. Rosenbom, as he is known, was a poor old man who, according to the legend, froze to death outside this church on New Years Day in 1717. He has his arm extended and palm facing upward reminiscent of a beggar and, if you feel badly for him, just lift his hat up and drop a coin into the slot in his head.

The **Admiralty Park**, one of two parks in the city center, has the **Admiralty Clock Tower**, which was built to help the workers at the dockyard keep track of time. As you make your way to the western end of town, you'll enter **Björkholmen**, the old town. It was spared from the fire in 1790 and still looks virtually the same as 200 years ago, with its old wooden houses, giving you a good idea of how the shipyard workers lived in the past.

Guided Tours

The naval shipyard is at the southern tip of Trossö and can only be visited through guided tours in the summer since it is still an active military zone. In the two-hour tour you will see the first dry dock in Scandinavia, built here in the early 18th century, and the ropewalk building, which is 300 m/840 feet long.

Did You Know? A "ropewalk building" is a long narrow structure where rope is made by twisting individual strands together. The one in Karlskrona is among the longest wooden buildings in Sweden.

This is one of the few dockyards in the world where it is still possible to see buildings and docks specifically designed for the construction of warships.

Note: All military areas such as the naval shipyard and the Kungsholm Fortress require that visitors show valid identification before entering, regardless of their nationality.

The Archipelago

There are about 90 islands here, many of them outside Karlskrona. They were one of the main reasons why the city was built here since the islands made it easier for the navy to protect the city from foreign invasions. Some of the islands are still operated by the military and foreign tourists were not even allowed in the archipelago until 1997. In Karlskrona, most boats depart from the Fisktorget Square, but some leave from near the Maritime Museum.

Most of the bigger islands, such as Sturkö, Hasslö and Tjurkö, have land connections and can be reached by driving east from the city on E22 and turning right after about 10 km (seven miles). Aspö is the only one of the bigger islands that requires boat transfer, but the boat departs conveniently from the eastern part of Trossö near the Maritime Museum. The boat ride is free of charge and you can bring your car or bike along as well.

Some of the smaller islands in the eastern archipelago can be accessed by boat from Yttre Park. To get there, instead of turning right on E22 to the land-connected larger islands, keep going until you get to the village of Jämjö where you take a right and keep driving until you get to Yttre Park or Torhamn by the sea where the ferries depart.

Sightseeing in the Karlskrona Archipelago

The bigger islands outside Karlskrona are the ones most worth seeing, partly because they are more accessible but also because there is more to see. The two most interesting attractions are the **Drottningskär Citadel** on Aspö and the **Kungsholm Fortress** on Kungsholmen, between Aspö and Tjurkö.

On the 20-minute ride out to **Aspö** you will pass the skerry with the little fortress called **Godnatt** (Goodnight) on your left. It looks as if it was built on the water's surface since it covers the entire skerry. The good thing about Aspö is that, despite being a fairly small island, it has a lot to offer, with activities such as hiking, biking, horseback riding, tennis, bathing and much more. You get a good bit of culture here as well if you visit the art gallery and the old **Drottningskär Citadel**, which dates from the 17th century and is well preserved. The citadel was built on the tip of the eastern part of Aspö to overlook all ships headed for the city. Guided tours are offered if you contact the tourist office. There is also a restaurant in the citadel with a fascinating 17th century atmosphere (see *Places to Eat*).

If you want to spend the night on the island, you can stay at the old **Lotshus** (pilot tower) just a few minutes walk from the citadel.

The **Kungsholm Fortress** on the little island just east of Aspö is still a military area and has been manned continuously for 300 years. There's a museum, a botanical garden and the unique and peculiar circular harbor, among other things to see here.

Getting Around

For **guided tours** in the archipelago, contact the **Skärgårdstrafiken** office by Fisktorget in the western part of Trossö. ☎ 0455-78330.

Boats to Kungsholmen and Kungsholm Fortress depart daily at 10 am from Fisktorget. From there you can also take boats to Aspö and Tjurkö. Bookings can be made through the tourist office, ☎ 0455-303490.

Cultural Adventures

❖ The Maritime Museum

Since Karlskrona had the central naval base in Sweden for centuries, what better city for a Maritime Museum? And what better place in Karlskrona than Stumholmen, the island connected by bridge to the southeast corner of Trossö. Karlskrona has had a Maritime Museum since 1752, making it one of the oldest in the world, though it's only been on Stumholmen

since 1997. Until the mid-1990s, Stumholmen was still a part of the Naval Base and not accessible to the public.

The Maritime Museum is the one attraction you should not miss. The museum is in a rectangular building that stretches out into the sea like a pier and the way it is set up makes it much more interesting than a regular museum. An impressive display of pictures, paintings, maps and models shows everything from shipbuilding to strategies and tactics of battle. The tough life on board the ships during the many battles in the Baltic Sea in the 17th and 18th centuries is also well depicted.

Perhaps the most impressive part of the exhibition are the giant ships' figureheads in a room at the end of the building. Most of them were made by Johan Törnström, the most famous sculptor in those days. The ones in the museum are more than 200 years old in many cases, taken from ships that were used in battle. They are amazingly well preserved. From this room, you will also get an incredible view of the bay and the surrounding islands. The upper floor concentrates mainly on the modern era and a large part of it is dedicated to submarines, which is also fascinating.

The museum is open daily June-August, 10 am-6 pm, but closed on Mondays during the rest of the year. Entrance is 50 kr/$5.50. ☎ 0455-53902, www.marinmuseum.se.

Adventures on Foot

❖ Eriksberg Viltreservat

Blekinge is known as "the Garden of Sweden" and the Eriksberg Viltreservat Park represents its province well. With 2,500 acres between Karlshamn and Ronneby, it's one of the biggest enclosed nature reserves in the world. The main building here has a café and a museum but the real adventure is to go out and look at the wildlife. The best time to see the animals is in late afternoon or early evenings. You can take a safari where you will get a chance to see deer, red deer, wild boar, bison and moufflon sheep in their own habitat. Sea

eagles and golden eagles can also be spotted here in the forest or near the sea. The tour takes you through both lush forests and along the sea. If walking, you must remember to never leave the designated walking path, for your own safety and for that of the animals. You're also welcome to take your own car into the area if you'd like. If you don't have a car, you can take a bus or a tractor and a trailer. Just remember that you need to book these in advance, ☎ 0454-60058. For fishing enthusiasts, there are great opportunities as well and Eriksberg is known to have some of the best pike fishing in the country. For more information about food and accommodation in Eriksberg, see *Places to Stay & Eat*.

❖ Hiking

The **Blekinge Trail** is 250 km/150 miles long and stretches through the entire province from Sölvesborg to Kristianopel. The trail is marked orange and divided into 12 sections, covering mountains, forests, open fields and coastal regions. There are wind shelters used for accommodation all along the trail and, if you're interested in further options, contact a tourist office in the region where you want to hike. Maps of the trail can also be purchased at a tourist office for 15 kr/$1.60.

Adventures on Water

❖ Fishing

Mörrumsån is one of the most famous rivers for salmon fishing in Sweden and the coastal region is well known for its pike fishing. Salmon fishing in Mörrum was for many years a highly lucrative commercial business owned by the State. The earliest documented evidence of this dates back to the early 13th century. These days, there is no commercial fishing in Mörrumsån but sport fishing is ever so popular. At **Laxens Hus (the Salmon House)** by Kungsforsen in Mörrum you can learn more about the species found in the river, including the salmon of course. The exhibition includes a large aquarium and you can even see the fish in their natural habitat through a window facing the river. More information under *Places to Eat*.

❖ Canoeing & Kayaking

The archipelago in Blekinge is ideal for kayaking and canoeing. Karlskrona with its great location on the tip of a peninsula and several islands nearby is a great starting point. Karlshamn and Ronneby are good options as well. If river canoeing is what you are looking for, there are three big rivers well suited for

this activity: **Lyckebyån** near Karlskrona in the east, **Ronnebyån** in the middle and **Mörrumsån** in the western part of the province. Lyckebyån has a few tough passages and is better suited for experienced paddlers, while Ronnebyån is calmer. Mörrumsån varies; remember that this is one of the most popular fishing rivers in the country and the last few miles toward the sea are not even accessible in the summer by paddlers due to the busy fishing season.

❖ Canoe Rentals

Kajakklubben Eskimå, Långäbadsvägen 4, Karlskrona, ☎ 0455-12476 or 0730-599203 for bookings, www.eskima.se. Price example: 125 kr/$13 for two-four hours. Located on the island of Långö on your right side before you get to the central area of Karlskrona coming from the E22.

Skönstavik Camping, ☎ 0455-23700 www.skonstavik-camping.se, is near the E22 by the entrance to Karlskrona. They offer a range of rental canoes.

Adventures on Wheels

❖ Biking

Aspö is the perfect size for a one-day bike excursion. The island has bike rentals but you should call ahead to reserve one. You can also rent a bike in Karlskrona and bring it with you on the boat. For more information about Aspö, see pages 122-23.

Bike Rentals

■ On Aspö

Skärgårdskiosken, next to the pier where the boat arrives. ☎ 0455-339416 or 0734-339416.

Bebo Skärgård, next to Skärgårdskiosken, also rents out boats and accommodation (same telephone number as above).

■ In Karlskrona

The Tourist Office, by Stortorget, the big square, behind the Fredrik Church. Bike rental here is cheap. Only 30 kr/$3.20 per day. ☎ 0455-303490.

Sportkompaniet, ☎ 0455-14760.

Places to Stay

❖ Ronneby Brunn

Brunnsparken, Ronneby, ☎ 0457-75000, $$$. Established in 1897 and one of the most popular and famous spas in Sweden for the last 100 years. It is also one of the leading hotels for conferences. There's a restaurant, a nightclub, bowling alley and swimming pool on the premises.

First Hotel Statt, Ronnebygatan 37-39, Karlskrona, ☎ 0455-55550, $$$, www.firsthotels.se. Each room is decorated individually in this hotel, one of the most popular in Karlskrona. It's on one of the main streets downtown and many locals come here for the fine cuisine offered in the hotel's restaurant.

Eriksbergs Säteri and Gastronomi, Åryd, Trensum, ☎ 0454-60107, $$$. By the sea between Karlshamn and Ronneby in the nature reserve area. See *Eriksberg* section for more information.

A-Hotel B&B, Alamedan 10, Karlskrona, ☎ 0455-300250, $$, www.ahotel.se. Just a short walk from the shopping area is this charming and friendly little bed & breakfast. Singles as well as families will find it to be a very reasonably priced option. Every room is equipped with TV and Internet connection and there is a gym, laundry room and kitchen in the building.

Dragsö Camping, Dragsövägen, Karlskrona, ☎ 0455-15354 or 0708-443261, $. On a little island connected by bridge to the main island of Trossö, the campsite is just a short walk from the city center. You can also take an archipelago boat to the city. Other options are canoeing and biking, fishing and tours to the archipelago. Dragsö is also a great place for swimming. There are sandy beaches and cliffs.

HOTEL PRICES SWEDEN	
For double room including taxes. For hostels with no double rooms, price is per bed in dormitory.	
$	Under 300 kr ($39)
$$	300-600 kr ($39-$78)
$$$	601-1,200 kr ($40-$156)
$$$$	Over 1,200 kr ($156+)

Places to Eat

Michelangelo, Ronnebygatan 29, Karlskrona, ☎ 0455-12195, $$. Italian restaurant on the main street in Karlskrona. Really good food and good service.

RESTAURANT PRICES SWEDEN	
For one main course & a beverage, including taxes.	
$	Less than 75 kr ($10)
$$	75-150 kr ($10-$20)
$$$	151-200 kr ($21-$25)
$$$$	Over 200 kr ($25+)

Montmartre, Ronnebygatan 18, Karlskrona, ☎ 0455-311833, $$. Well-known restaurant in downtown Karlskrona with a pleasant open-air area in the summer.

Kristianopel Gästgivaregård, Kristianopel, ☎ 0455-366030, $$. In the picturesque little village on the east coast.

Laxerian, Kungsforsen at Mörrum, ☎ 0454-51331, $$. Good restaurant by Laxens Hus (the Salmon House) in Mörrum.

Drottningskärs Kastell, Aspö, ☎ 0455-339300, $$$. High-quality restaurant with a unique atmosphere in the 17th-century citadel on Aspö. Open daily in the summer and other times for pre-booked parties. Reservations necessary.

Café Sött & Salt, the Harbor, Kristianopel, ☎ 0455-366014, $.

■ Småland

Introduction

Småland is the biggest province in the south of Sweden but large parts of it are densely forested and uninhabited. The name is made up of the words små and land (small and land) since the province consisted of little pieces of open land in between all the large forests. Historically, the people of Småland have mainly been farmers and for some reason developed a reputation for being stingy, which they are sometimes (half-jokingly) called even today.

There are three cities of decent size: Jönköping, Växjö and Kalmar. **Jönköping**, by Lake Vättern in the north, is sometimes referred to as "the Jerusalem of Sweden" for its many

churches. Kalmar is one of the most historically significant cities in Scandinavia as it was here that the union of the three countries in 1397 was formed.

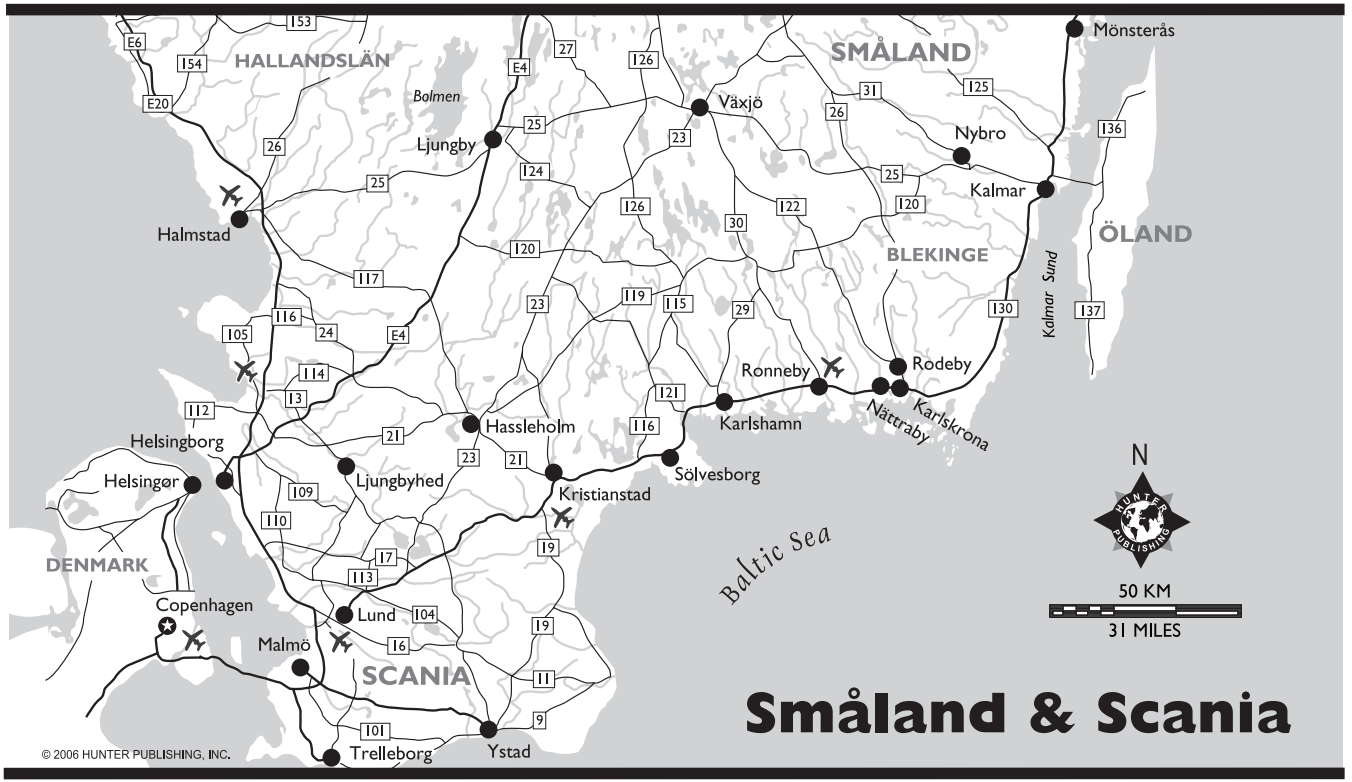
Brief History

Småland was for many years on the border of Denmark in the south and west, which wasn't always the ideal place to live. The southern part of Småland, in particular, was isolated from the rest of Sweden and the small areas of land in between the forests were practically independent. The king still wanted to take advantage of the fact that the farmers lived in his country and tried to tax them. Not surprisingly, this wasn't appreciated by the farm owners. So an agreement was made that every owner should supply the king with a horse and a man for the army. This agreement created a strong cavalry for the king that would be useful in battle. But Gustav Vasa, who came into power in 1523, started to tax the farmers of Småland heavily, which eventually led to an uprising. The revolution of 1542 is known as the Dacke Feud, named after the leader of the farmers, Nils Dacke, and is one of the most famous uprisings in Sweden's history. The farmers were successful but Vasa was on the rebound only a year later when Dacke was found and killed by the king's men.

Kalmar

Kalmar was once the southernmost city in Sweden and one of the biggest. The city gave its name to the union formed in 1397 that attempted to bring the three Scandinavian countries together (read more about this under *History* in the Introduction, page 16). Kalmar is well preserved and the city center is in one of the oldest sections in town, the island of Kvarnholmen.

Kalmar Castle



Småland & Scania

The **Kalmar Castle** is from the 13th century. It was most important during the Vasa era and became known as "the key to the country." The castle suffered greatly from a Danish invasion in 1611 known as the Kalmar War and in 1658, when many bordering provinces became Swedish after the Peace Treaty in Roskilde, the castle lost nearly all significance. In the 18th century, the castle served mostly as a prison and a brewery. Since then, several restorations have been made and today the castle and the Öland Bridge are two of the biggest reasons people come to Kalmar. When the bridge was built in 1972, connecting the second-biggest island in Sweden with the mainland, it was the longest bridge in Europe. The short-term effects for Kalmar were mostly negative as many people in the ferry business lost their jobs. In the long run, however, the bridge has made both Kalmar and Öland more attractive for visitors.

Excursion to Öland

Öland is part of Kalmar County even though it's a separate province. The island has a total of 25,000 inhabitants year-round, though in the summer the number increases to two million. Many of Öland's visitors stay for several weeks at one of the campsites and enjoy the beaches and sunny weather. The northern half, especially around Böda, is popular for those seeking long sandy beaches and sunshine. For a one-day excursion, however, the southern half is much more interesting than the north and Borgholm, in the center, is one of the few reasons to go north of the Öland Bridge. **Borgholm** is the main town on the island with **Borgholm Castle** as the main attraction. The castle was built for Swedish royals and was the biggest fortification in Scandinavia in the Middle Ages. The Kings were never popular with the people of Öland and, through the years, the castle became less important to Sweden. A disastrous fire in 1806 made the castle into a ruin and today it's the biggest ruined castle in northern Europe. It hosts concerts in the summer and has an interesting museum well worth a visit.

Alvaret is an area in the inner region of southern Öland and is known for its rich flora. The flat, treeless limestone here is a sharp contrast to the coastal regions and is also part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Hiking and biking on Alvaret is popular and there are several trails available. Maps can by purchased at one of the tourist offices. At the southern tip of

Öland is the **Ottenby Nature Reserve**, a famous spot for ornithologists. At the southernmost point is the **lighthouse Långe Jan**, one of the oldest and highest lighthouses in the country. You can climb all the way up to the top and enjoy the view. Entrance is free.

THE WINDMILLS

Windmills are typical symbols for Öland and you'll notice why when you get there. Nobody knows exactly how long they've been around, but the oldest one dates back to 1546. In the 19th century, just about every farm had their own windmill and there were an estimated 2,000 of them on Öland around that time. Over the next hundred years, when technology caught up with people here and the windmills lost their purpose, the number decreased dramatically. Today, there are only about 400 left – still a lot considering Öland's size.

Getting Here & Getting Around

Kalmar has an airport with daily connections to Stockholm through **SAS**, **Skyways** and **Swe Fly**. Direct trains are also available to Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. The Öland Bridge is six km/3.6 miles long, goes from Kalmar to Färjestaden on Öland, and is the obvious choice for the majority of travelers. Riding a bike on the bridge is risky business and even illegal in the summer. If you want to take a bike over, there's a free bus ride available for transport. Ask at the tourist office for this service. If you still prefer a ferry, there's a route between Oskarshamn and Byxelkrok in northern Öland. For a one-day excursion, a car is convenient, but buses leave frequently from Kalmar in the summer. From Stockholm, **Silverlinjen** is a bus company that takes you to Öland via Kalmar year-round. ☎ 0485-26111, www.silverlinjen.se.

Tourist Offices in Kalmar & Öland

- Kalmar Tourist Office, Ölandsvägen 9, ☎ 0480-417700
- Borgholm, at the Bus Station, ☎ 0485-89000
- Färjestaden, by the Öland Bridge, ☎ 0485-560600

Places to Stay & Eat

In Kalmar, the area called Ängö just north of Kvarnholmen is an old working-class district that today is charming, with plenty of budget hotels and an **STF hostel**, ☎ 0480-12928. **Stensö Camping**, ☎ 0480-88803, is two km/1.2 miles south of the city, close to the sea and in a peaceful environment. It was also here that King Gustav Vasa disembarked after living in asylum in Germany during the early 16th century. Kalmar has an impressive supply of cafés, restaurants and pubs, many of them on the main island of Kvarnholmen.

Glasriket

This area in southeastern Småland just west of Nybro is widely known as the Glass Kingdom. The first glassworks created here was Kosta in 1742, which is midway between Kalmar and Växjö. The art of glassblowing was introduced to Sweden in the 16th century when King Gustav Vasa brought glassblowers up from Venice and glass was produced in both Stockholm and Scania long before the first glassworks in Småland was built. But the area between Nybro and Växjö in eastern Småland is what put the art of glassblowing on the map. This was the perfect setting for glassworks, with plenty of trees to use as firewood and several lakes to provide sand, the main component in glass production.

Eventually, the glassworks became bigger and more modern and it wouldn't take long before this little region had some of the most modern glassworks in Europe. The big expansion

came in the 19th century, when many workers started setting up their own businesses.

The number of glassworks in the Glass Kingdom is now down to about 15 but if you think there's a risk of extinction, consider that one million tourists come here every year. That's an astonishing number considering there are no major cities, no big international airports or even highways nearby. Blowing glass is also an art that will never completely be replaced by mass production. Glass production has now become big business and most glassworks in this area are owned by the same company.

> **Tip:** At one time there were close to 50 glassworks in this area. Nobody knows for sure how many there have been in total over the years, but to find out nearly everything else there is to know about glass, visit the Glass Museum in Växjö. This museum probably has the biggest collection of glass in the world.

❖ Getting Here

If you drive from Kalmar heading west, you will find yourself in Glasriket when you get to Nybro, which is also the main town of Glasriket and its border to the east. From Karlskrona, take Road 28 north. After about 50 km/30 miles you will get to Emmaboda and from there you can either keep going on the same road toward Kosta or take Road 120 toward Nybro, depending on where in Glasriket you want to go. Look for road signs with a white flower and with the word "Glasriket" to guide you.

Having your own transport will be beneficial when visiting Glasriket. If you're relying on public transportation, Kalmar and Växjö both have train connections with the bigger cities in Sweden. From there, buses are available.

> **Did You Know?** When glass was first produced in Sweden, many, including the influential archbishop of Uppsala Olaus Magnus, were concerned about what the consequences of drinking out of this fragile material could be. When Swedes in those days would get

drunk they liked to hit each other in the head with their mugs. While that probably hurt quite a bit, Olaus Magnus was concerned that, with glass, it could have more serious and possibly lethal consequences.

❖ Visiting the Glass Kingdom

When you're here, try to see as many different glassworks as you can. There are about 15 of them in a fairly small area and you can easily cover four or five of them in a day. You are usually no more than a 10- or 15-minute drive from the next. Look for signs that say "glasbruk." You will find that each one has its own individual atmosphere and you should try to visit at least one big and one small glassworks. The two biggest, Kosta and Orrefors, are understandably the most visited and better suited to accommodate busloads of tourists. Another advantage is that you can watch glassblowers in action at Kosta on weekends, even in the low-season, which you normally can't do in the smaller places. On the other hand, the smaller glassworks have more charm and are not as crowded. Some of them haven't changed much at all since the 19th century when most of them were built, and the atmospheres here are completely different from the bigger ones. **Bergdala** and **Åfors** are two examples of smaller productions that are worth visiting. The opening hours of the glassworks are normally Monday-Friday 9 am-6 pm, Saturdays 10 am-4 pm and Sundays 12 am-4 pm, but the hours are sometimes extended in the summer. Generally the blowing room hours are Monday-Friday 8 am-3 pm, but in the summer they extend through the weekends. Kosta is open during weekends even in the low season.

❖ Shopping

Every glassworks has a shop, which for many is the highlight of the trip. You can get some pretty good deals here as well. Most products are substandard and therefore sold much cheaper than in stores elsewhere in Sweden. Usually they have imperfections that are barely visible to the naked eye. Some bigger glassworks, like Kosta, have a section with standard items as well and these are about the same price as in stores. You will also find items in the standard section that are no longer produced and can't be found on the market anymore.

> **Tip:** With the **Glasriket Pass** you will get a discount of 50 kr/$5.30 on anything over 500 kr/$53; the card also includes entrance to the blowing rooms. The Pass costs 95 kr/$10 and is valid throughout the year.

The bigger glassworks can also arrange shipping of purchased items. A 6% tax is added but the 25% VAT, normally added to all products sold in Sweden, is not applied.

Kosta

Kosta is the oldest glassworks in Glasriket that still exists, built in 1742 by two former men of the military under King Karl XII. Anders Koskull and Georg Stael von Holstein were rewarded for their efforts and appointed county governors of Kronoberg (Växjö) and Kalmar. When they decided to start their own glassworks, they set it up between their two cities and named it Kosta, a combination of their abbreviated last names (Ko-Sta).

The downside to being one of the biggest glassworks is that it may feel touristy, especially when you see all the buses in the parking lot and crowded lines in the gift shops. The good part, and the reason why I recommend it, is because of everything else you will experience here. The blowing room is perhaps the most fascinating, whether you are at Kosta or any other factory. The one here in Kosta, just past the shop, is among the biggest in Glasriket. After you've watched the skilled workers in action and walked out the doors, you will see the museum building and exhibition hall right across from you. The museum is quite interesting and you will notice how little the tools used in glassmaking have changed; they look virtually the same now as they did 200 years ago.

Orrefors

Orrefors is definitely the best-known name among the glassworks even though it's one of the youngest. Established in 1898, it didn't take long for Orrefors to claim world fame, thanks to skilled designers like Simon Gate and Edward Hald. Originally it was an iron factory but, when the owners realized how lucrative the glass business had become, they

convereted it to a glassworks. Orrefors took the art of glassmaking to a new level with innovative techniques and new designs introduced by Hald and Gate in the early 20th century.

Tip: Flygfors is a little community just two km/1.2 miles east of Orrefors, where you'll find a man named Janos Baranyai, who works as a "glass mechanic." If you break one of your recently purchased items from the Glass Kingdom, stop by here and he should be able to repair it for you. **Johan's Glassliperi**, ☎ 0481-30136.

❖ Events

Hyttsill

Hyttsill is nothing less than a big party arranged for the general public in the summer. Traditionally, food and drinks were served on long tables in the smeltries after work. This tradition has carried on and is popular among visitors to Glasriket. Herring (sill) is one of the delicacies offered. They take place at Kosta, Orrefors, Målerås and Pukeberg every day in the summer. Listings of where they are held can be found at the tourist offices or on www.glasriket.se. Entry cost is 260 kr/$28 per person.

Music in Glasriket

This week-long festival in the first week of August features over 100 events and has in just 10 years become one of the biggest in Sweden. The performances are either indoors in churches and smeltries, or outdoors in meadows. For more information and bookings, ☎ 0481-15800, www.musiki-glasriket.se.

❖ Adventures in Glasriket

Glass Blowing Class

Glass is made through tremendous precision and meticulousness. It looks easy when you see the professionals do it, but just try it yourself if you think so. They say it takes about 10 years to become a master glassmaker since the craft is

learned in stages and you need to develop a certain feel for the glass. There are no shortcuts.

The experienced master glassmaker will show you the basics of glassblowing by teaching you the different steps with the various techniques involved. The first step is to put molten glass, heated to about 1,000 degrees, from the oven onto the pipe. Just making sure that it stays on is hard enough. The next step is to form a bubble by blowing air through the pipe into the molten glass. The glass cools off quickly, which leaves little room for error. Does it sound hard? It is, but you'll get plenty of time to practice on your own too. You can choose from a one-day beginner's course, a five-day beginner's course and a five-day advanced course. The price is 1,000 kr/$107 per day. ☎ 0478-12751, www.kostaglascenter.se.

Hiking on the Emigrant Trail

The last half of the 19th century and the first couple of decades of the 20th century was a time of great emigration in these parts of Sweden. Times were tough and about 1.2 million Swedes migrated to America during this period. An area southwest of Glasriket is called the Emigrant Area, not so much because more people emigrated from this region than the rest of Småland, but because of the books by author Vilhelm Moberg. Moberg, one of the most famous Swedish authors, grew up here during the emigration and had many relatives who migrated. He wrote several books that later also became popular films and musicals.

The Emigrant Trail is 120 km/72 miles and covers the three municipalities of Lessebo, Emmaboda and Tingsryd. Maps

can be purchased at the tourist offices. For those not familiar with the works of Moberg, you may think there is nothing special about the area, but the marked trail in this great natural area of southern Småland is the main reason why people hike here. **Emmaboda Tourist Office**, ☎ 0471-18117, has the best information about the different sections of the Emigrant Trail.

❖ Tourist Offices in Glasriket & the Emigrant Area

- **Nybro** is the main town in Glasriket and has the head tourist office for the entire region by the city's Main Square, ☎ 0481-45215. It is open year-round.
- **Kosta**, ☎ 0478-50705 or 0478-50870 (only open in the summer).
- **Orrefors**, ☎ 0481-30159 (only open in the summer).
- **Lessebo**, ☎ 0478-12519.
- **Emmaboda**, ☎ 0471-18117.
- **Tingsryd**, ☎ 0477-44164 or 0477-44165.

❖ Places to Stay

Hotel Orrefors, Kentavägen 29, Orrefors, ☎ 0481-30035, $$$. This hotel is part of the Best Western chain and ideally situated in the center of town. There are 158 rooms, all fully equipped, including cable TV. Internet connection is also available to guests.

Stora Hotellet, Mellangatan 11, Nybro, ☎ 0481-51935, $$$. In the downtown area of Nybro, the main town of the Glass Kingdom, this hotel is a great starting point for your adventures in the land of crystal. www.storahotellet.se.

Kosta Värdshus, Kosta Glassworks, ☎ 0478-50006, $$. This comfortable inn is conveniently located next to the glassworks in Kosta. All rooms are modern and equipped with shower, toilet, TV and refrigerator.

STF Hostel in Orrefors, Silversparregatan 14, Orrefors, ☎ 0481-30020, $. Cheap living in a classic glassworks community. Open May-September or by arrangement.

❖ Places to Eat

Orrefors Värdshus, Bruksområdet, Orrefors, ☎ 0481-30059 or 0708-223652. Good restaurant that, apart from its regular menu, also offer the famous Hyttsill parties.

Glasportens Taverna, Kalmarvägen E25, Nybro, ☎ 0481-51940, $$. Traditional Swedish, as well as Thai, food.

Heading North on the E4 Highway

The trip along the E4 highway doesn't have to be just transportation. By making a few stops at the right places, you will find that this journey has quite a lot to offer. The stretch from Jönköping to Gränna along Lake Vättern is one of the most scenic drives you will find, looking down at the second-largest lake in the country, with the island Visingsö in the middle. Jönköping is by far the biggest city in the area and beautifully situated right by the lake, but there's surprisingly little to see or do here. So it's better to keep going until you get to Gränna, just 15 minutes farther north. Before you get to Gränna, right after you pass Jönköping, you will see a wooden giant on your right. This giant, according to the legend, was on his way across Lake Vättern one day when he took a piece of land and threw it in the lake so that his wife wouldn't get her feet wet. That piece of land is today known as the island of **Visingsö**. The creator of the giant is a sculptor named Calle Örnemark who fell 12 m (40 feet) as he was putting the finishing touches on his creation. Fortunately he survived without any serious injuries.

❖ Gränna

The founder of Gränna, Count Per Brahe, was one of the wealthiest and most influential people of his time and owned practically everything as far as the eye could see from Gränna. He already had several residences, one of them Visingsborg on the island Visingsö, but he wanted another where he could better survey his land. A little farther up from Gränna was the perfect location, he thought, and he built the castle called **Brahehus**. Today, the highway goes right past it and, although there is only a ruin left, it's a popular place to stop, have a picnic, look around and enjoy the view.

Most towns with a population of less than 5,000 people can't expect a million visitors per year. But Gränna is not like most towns. Although it's picturesque and right by the lake, near one of the most heavily traveled stretches of highway in Sweden, the main reason people come here is for the candy. The name Gränna has for the last 150 years been synonymous with a little piece of hard candy known as "Polkagris" (Peppermint Rock). It was invented by the poor widow Amalia Eriksson in 1859. She kept the recipe a secret until she died. Today, there are about 10 places in this little town that make the candy which, in addition to peppermint, also contains sugar, water and vinegar. They come in all shapes, sizes and colors, but the original and only "real" Polkagris is always white with red stripes. If you ask nicely, you can go behind the scenes and see how they make the Polkagris. **Gränna Polkagriskokeri** on Brahegatan 39 near the tourist office is a good place to go.

- **Gränna Tourist Office**, ☎ 0390-41010, is on the main street, Brahegatan.

The Grenna Museum

A reason to stay in Gränna for just a while longer after you've visited the candy stores is the Grenna Museum. The museum deals with one of the most memorable balloon rides ever to depart from Swedish soil. It began in Gränna in 1897. S.A. Andrée was a man who, together with two companions, took off for the North Pole in his balloon, named *The Eagle*. The purpose of this excursion was to do scientific research and gain better knowledge of the Arctic area. Nobody would discover what happened to them for another 33 years when they were found dead by a Norwegian crew on an island near Svalbard. The three men, along with most of their personal belongings, were still intact, including a diary that told amazing stories about their trip. Many of these items are on display in the museum where you can also find out more about this interesting adventure. The Grenna Museum is at Grenna Kulturgård on Brahegatan 38-40, ☎ 0390-41015.

❖ Visingsö

Visingsö is the biggest island in Lake Vättern and easily accessible from Gränna. The ferry trip from Gränna harbor costs around 40 kr/$4.30 and an extra 25 kr if you bring a bike. You can take your car along but there's really no point, considering how small the island is. You're better off leaving the car in Gränna and renting a bike on Visingsö. Or take the popular horse-and-carriage ride offered.

- **Visingsö Tourist Office**, the Harbor, Visingsö, ☎ 0390-40193.

Sightseeing on the Island

Visingsö has always been a popular destination in the summer for the scenery, the natural surroundings and the interesting history of the island. There are plenty of things to see and do here. There are the ruins from the old **Visingsborg** built by Brahe and burned down by some Russian prisoners who were kept here in 1718. Even older ruins are of **Visingsö Castle** near Näs at the southern tip of the island, nowadays simply referred to as the **Näs Ruins**. This building from the 12th century was the first royal castle in Sweden. Unfortunately it was destroyed during a battle for the throne in 1318. There are two churches on the island which are also well worth visiting. Near the Visingsborg ruins is the **Brahe Church** from 1636 and a little farther north is the **Kumlaby Church**, with wall paintings from the 16th century and an incredible view from the tower. The **Temple Garden** is a replica of an old Greek temple and is today used as a gallery.

Visingsö Castle

In the early 19th century, several oak trees were planted on Visingsö to supply the navy's shipbuilders, but soon the navy became less important, so many of the trees are still there today. Although Visingsö is the biggest island in Lake

Vättern, it is only 14 km/8.4 miles long and three km/1.8 miles wide so it can easily be explored in an afternoon.

The most popular ways of getting around here are biking and horse-and-carriage. Bikes can be rented by the harbor where the horse-and-carriage tours also depart. The tours last about one hour and take you through the tranquil oak forest and the Kumlaby Church before returning. You can also rent the whole equipage for yourself and explore the island at your own pace.

❖ Vadstena

Heading north from Gränna, the E4 Highway will make its way inland by Ödeshög after about 10-15 minutes. Take a detour instead and stay along the Vättern shore on Road 50 toward Vadstena. This pleasant little town has many well preserved buildings from the 13th-16th centuries, including the famous **Vadstena Castle** built for King Gustav Vasa, where he also was married in 1552. The majestic castle is open to the public and guided tours are offered in the summer. Another historical attraction is the newly opened **Sankta Birgitta Museum** at the opposite end of town next to the monastery. Birgitta lived in the 14th century and is Sweden's most famous saint. She founded the monastery here in Vadstena and her impact on religious beliefs in Sweden was strong, until the reformation by Vasa some 200 years later. The walk from the castle and the monastery is a pleasant one between old wooden houses and cobblestoned streets.

In Sweden the word *Sankta*, designates a female saint, while *Sankt* is the male equivalent. When these terms are used as part of a church name, they are usually abbreviated as S:ta and S:t respectively on signs and in printed materials.

Göta Canal

From Vadstena you are only a short drive to Motala which is where you will encounter the famous Göta Canal. Göta Canal is sometimes called "the biggest museum of Sweden" and is mostly a tourist attraction these days, with no commercial activity (except the guided boat tours). The canal has a total length of 190 km/114 miles and goes from Mem by the Baltic

Sea in the east to Sjötorp by the shores of Lake Vänern in the west. Of the total length, 87 km/52 miles are man-made, while the rest are rivers and lakes, including Lake Vättern, the second-biggest lake in Sweden.

From Sjötorp it is possible to continue all the way to Gothenburg and the west coast via Lake Vänern and Trollhätte Canal. **Motala** by the eastern shores of Lake Vättern is like the capital of Göta Canal and also where the company that owns the canal is located. One of the best and most famous areas is **Berg**, just outside Linköping. Out of the 58 locks on Göta Canal, the seven in Berg are the most famous and are a spectacular sight from the land or the water. **Borensberg** and **Lake Roxen**, both near Berg, are also worth a visit.

❖ History of the Canal

Building a canal, connecting the east coast with the west coast, had been contemplated in Sweden for many years, even as early as the Gustav Vasa era in the 16th century. Denmark controlled Öresund between Denmark and Sweden for many years and made all foreign ships pay hefty tolls every time they passed through. This should have been enough incentive to start building an alternative route for all the exported and imported merchandise. Sporadic attempts were made by kings over the next couple of centuries but most of them were too preoccupied with wars and didn't feel the need to spend too much time and money on such a project.

It wasn't until the early 19th century that King Karl XIII granted Baltzar von Platen the right to build a canal. Most of the work was done manually by soldiers serving in the area using ironclad spades. It took a total of 22 years and 58,000 men before it was finally completed in 1832. The end of the Öresund Toll in 1857, along with the introduction of the railroad a few decades later, were two of the reasons why canals became less important.

❖ Adventures

On Water

Taking a boat tour on the canal is popular and there are endless possibilities. You can take long trips across the entire canal, even all the way between Stockholm and Gothenburg. There are dozens of companies offering their services and

you can choose from tours of two days, one day, an afternoon, or an evening trip. If that's not enough, you also have the option of renting your own boat. The trip from start to finish takes several days and is quite expensive, whether you take a tour boat or rent one on your own. Either way, I wouldn't recommend spending more than a day on the canal or you'll get either bored or frustrated (or both). You're better off picking out a nice section, for example between Berg and Motala, and exploring that area fully.

Berg, near Linköping, is very picturesque and S/S *Maryonette* is a boat that takes you around on a guided tour. Bookings can be made at the **STF Hostel** in Berg, ☎ 013-60330. Or you can take the guided cruise on M/S *Wasa Lejon* between Berg and Borensberg, ☎ 011-127801. Another scenic journey starts at Motala and goes to Borensberg. Contact **Motala Kanaltrafik**, ☎ 070-6260249.

Canoeing/Kayaking Rental:

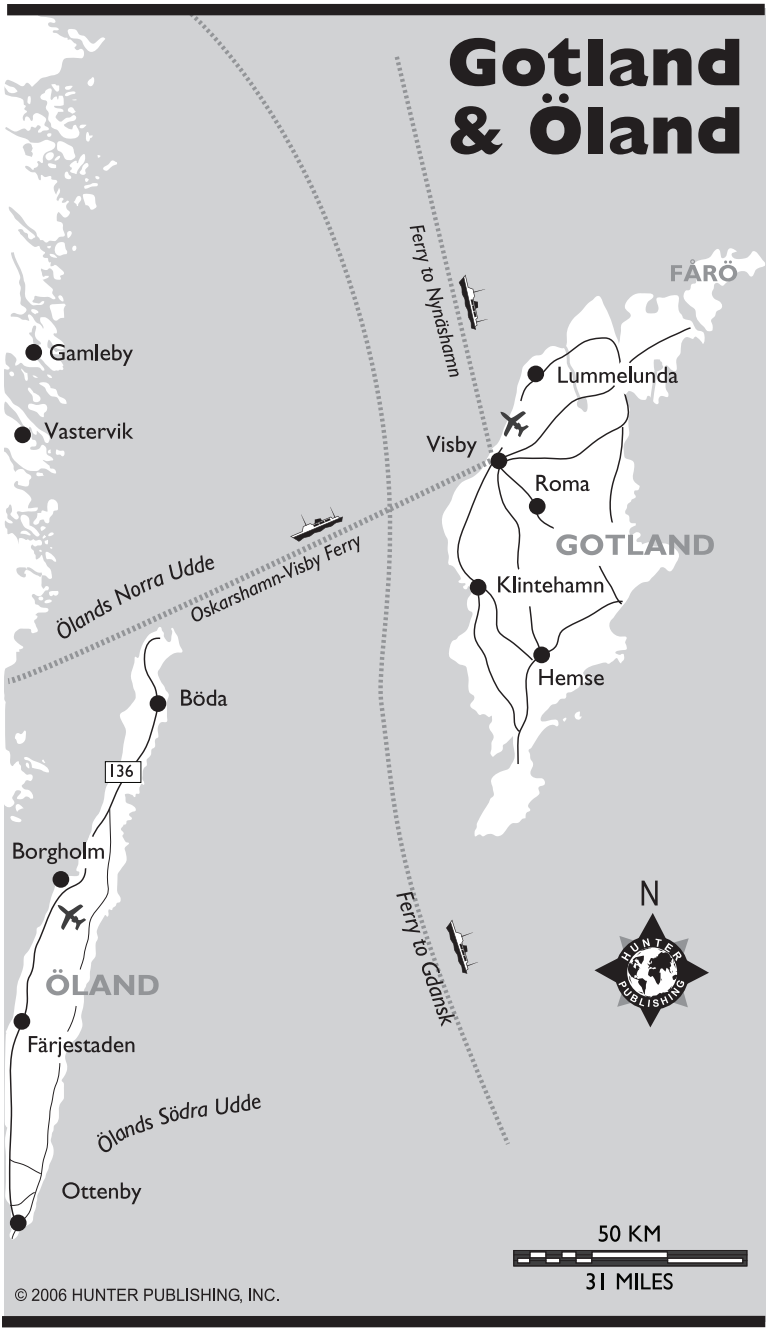
- **Ungdomens Hus**, Borensberg, ☎ 0141-40058.
- **Vättern Kajak**, Varamovägen 147, Motala, ☎ 0141-235959 or 0706613121.

On Ice

Activities in and around Göta Canal are mostly summer related, but if you happen to be in the area in the winter, you can go **skating** instead. The water level in the canal is lowered by one meter (three feet) to allow skaters to pass under the bridges. Given favorable weather conditions, anywhere you wish to skate is a good place. For a good workout, skate from Borensberg to Berg and back, a total of 40 km/24 miles. You can rent skates at the hostel in Borensberg, ☎ 0141-40820.

On Wheels

Biking has become increasingly popular recently. When the canal was built, von Platen used towpaths where horses and oxen pulled barges on the canal. These tree-lined paths make excellent bike trails today as they are flat, free from cars and offer the same scenery as from the boats in the canal. You can bike all the way from Motala by Lake Vättern to Söderköping near the Baltic Sea, a stretch of almost 100 km/60 miles. There are


Gotland & Öland
FÅRÖ
Ferry to Nyndshamn
Gamleby
Vastervik
Lummelunda
Visby
Roma
GOTLAND
Öländs Norra Udde
Oskarshamn-Visby Ferry
Klintehamn
Hemse
Böda
136
Borgholm
Ferry to Gdansk
N
ÖLAND
Färjestaden
Öländs Södra Udde
Ottenby
50 KM
31 MILES
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two cooperating companies at each end so you can rent at one and return at the other if you wish. For a shorter trip, Motala-Borensberg is 15 km/nine miles and Borensberg-Berg is 21 km/13 miles.

Bike Rentals

- **Velocipedes Bike Rental** in Motala, by the harbor, ☎ 0141-52111.
- **Korskullens Camping** in Söderköping, ☎ 0121-21621.

There's a company named **Resespecialisten utmed Göta Kanal**, ☎ 0506-12500, which specializes in adventures such as hiking, biking and canoeing along the canal. They have special deals where you can combine two or more activities. You can also call **Göta Kanalbolag** in Motala, ☎ 0141-202050, or book through tourist offices and campsites along the canal.

Tourist Offices along the Canal

- **Motala Tourist Office**, The Harbor, Motala, ☎ 0141-225254, www.motala.se.
- **Linköping Tourist Office**, Quality Ekoxen Hotel, Klostergatan 68, Linköping, ☎ 013-206835, www.linkoping.se.
- **Söderköping Tourist Office**, Stinsen by the E22, Söderköping, ☎ 0121-18160, www.soderkoping.se.
- **Destination Norrköping**, The Holmen Tower, Dalsgtan 9, Norrköping, ☎ 011-155000, www.destination.norrkoping.se.

❖ Places to Stay & Eat

Gyllene Uttern, Gränna, ☎ 0390-10800, $$$. It looks like a medieval castle but was actually built in the 20th century. There's nothing deceiving about the view, however, where you can see most of Lake Vättern and the island of Visingsö. The name, which means golden otter, comes from the two names of Gyllensvaan (who created the castle) and von Otter.

Göta Hotel, Götgatan 2, Borensberg, ☎ 0141-40060, $$$. In the picturesque little town of Borensberg you will find this charming inn from 1908 situated right next to the canal.

STF Hostel Bergs Slussar, Vreta Kloster Gästgivaregatan 1, Linköping, ☎ 013-60330, $$. This hostel is by the famous locks in Berg just outside Linköping. It has a café, mini-golf and bike rentals nearby. It's slightly more expensive than a regular hostel but also offers better quality and comfort.

STF Hostel Borensberg, Gamla Glasbruket, Borensberg, ☎ 0141-40820, $. Just east of the town of Borensberg, right along the canal, is this hostel in an old glassworks building. The rooms at the hostel can accommodate up to six people. Families and big groups have the option of staying in their own cabin with private bathroom and kitchen.

■ Gotland

Introduction

Many people in Sweden feel that when they travel to Gotland, it's like traveling abroad without crossing the national border. Gotland is Sweden's biggest island and famous for its favorable weather. Besides the weather, there are two things that distinguish Gotland: sheep and the funny-looking limestone formations known as rauks. About 58,000 people live on Gotland today and, of those, 22,000 live in Visby, the only city on the island. Tourism is a big source of income for many, especially in the summer season. Gotland too is most popular in the summer, which is when the majority of the 700,000 annual visitors come. Visiting in the spring or fall can be an advantage since you don't have to deal with the crowds but keep in mind that most attractions are only open during peak season.

Orientation

From Visby, Road 148 is the quickest to get to the northern part of Gotland but, unless you're in a hurry (and there's no reason for that), take Road 149 instead. This road will take you nearer the coastline and you should allow some time for a few detours

along the way. The famous **Lummelunda Caves** are the main attraction on this road but there are reasons to stop at other places as well. Take **Muramaris**, for example, an art gallery with a beautiful garden just five km/three miles north of Visby. Or why not stop at **Lickershamn**, where the highest rauk on Gotland, **Jungfrun**, is located.

While the north of Gotland is known for its industries, the south is quite the opposite. Agriculture and farming has been the dominating form of employment for several centuries. The southern part of Gotland is called Sudret and the peninsula at the bottom is known as Storsudret.

Brief History

Gotland had a key location for many centuries when trading between the Baltic countries was at its peak during the Hanseatic era. In the 12th century, a trade pact was established with the Hanseatic League in Germany and Visby became the center of all trading on the Baltic Sea. More and more Germans started moving to Visby to control trading and that irritated a lot of people, especially the farmers. A civil war broke out and the city wall was built to keep the farmers out. The Swedish king, Magnus Ladulås, was not happy about the Germans putting up a wall without permission and made them pay a hefty fine. The wall, of course, would remain and still stands today.

The year 1361 was a turning point and perhaps the most famous year in the history of Gotland. The Danish king, Valdemar Atterdag, right, had just conquered the province of Scania in the south and headed up to Gotland to seize control over the prosperous trading. The Danish troops were superior and the citizens of Visby had to pay three barrels filled with gold as ransom to the Danish king. The Hanseatic era would last until the 17th century, but Visby, as a trading city, suffered from the Danish invasion and never really recovered. From the mid-15th century, Visby was no longer one of the Hanseatic ports. Gotland remained under Danish rule for nearly 300 years before it was returned to Sweden in the 1645 Peace Treaty of Brömsebro.

Getting Here

By Plane

The airport on Gotland is just north of Visby. You can get here from both Arlanda and Bromma in the Stockholm area with Skyways and Gotlandsflyg, which takes about 45 minutes. Norrköping and Skavsta are two other airports that offer connections. Gothenburg and Malmö have connections with Visby but only in the summertime on certain days of the week. You can find some good deals on flights, sometimes as low as 300 kr/$32 one-way.

- **Skyways**, ☎ 020-959500, www.skyways.se.
- **Gotlandsflyg**, ☎ 0498-222222, www.gotlandsflyg.se.

By Boat

Nynäshamn and Oskarshamn are the two places for departure from the mainland with daily connections. Nynäshamn is just 50 minutes south of Stockholm; Oskarshamn, a few hours drive farther down the coast, is closer for those traveling from southern Sweden. Both trips take around three hours and cost from 165 kr/$18 per person.

- **Destination Gotland**, ☎ 0498-201020, www.destinationgotland.com.

Getting Around

Unless you plan to spend a week or more on the island, a car is a must to get around and see more than just Visby. You can bring a car over from the mainland for 260 kr/$27 on the ferry or rent one on the island. Gotland is quite flat and, if you have the time, biking around the island is ideal. An option is to combine biking with bus rides on some stretches to save time. Buses go frequently around Gotland and you can bring your bike on the bus provided it's not too crowded when you get on.

Car Rentals:

- **Avis**, Donnersplats 2, Visby, ☎ 0498-219810.

- **Micke's Biluthyrning**, by the harbor near the ferry terminal in Visby, ☎ 0498-266262 and 070-5603771, www.mickesbiluthyrning.se. They have used cars at cheap rates.

Bike Rentals:

- **Gotlands Cykeluthyrning**, Skeppsbron 2, Visby, ☎ 0498-214133.
- **O'hoj Cykeluthyrning**, at the Visby Harbor, ☎ 0498-201260.
- **Visby Hyrcykel**, ☎ 0498-249030.

Practical Information

The Visby Tourist Office, Hamngatan 4, Visby, ☎ 0498-201700, www.gotland.info, is just a few minutes walk from the harbor.

Gotland City, Kungsgatan 57, Stockholm, ☎ 08-4061500, www.gotlandcity.se, is a company with an office in Stockholm that offers package deals on trips to Gotland.

Gotlands Resor, Färjeleden 3, Visby, ☎ 0498-201260, is a travel agency on the island that can help you with organizing your trip and booking flights, boats, accommodation, bike rentals and the like. Their office is at Hamnhotellet by the ferry terminal.

Climate

The climate on Gotland is one of the best in the country. The average temperatures are not higher than the mainland but it rains a lot less and the sun shines a lot more. Thanks to its location, the island has more hours of sunshine per year than anywhere else in Sweden, with the possible exception of Öland. The northern region of Sweden has longer days in the summer and naturally more hours of sunshine around midsummer, but between April and October Gotland has little competition from the rest of the country. If there is anything negative to say about the climate, it would be that, as in most coastal regions, it tends to get windy at times.

Visby

Visby is a summer city, but that doesn't mean it's not worth visiting the rest of the year. Most people, however, visit from June to August when the city is buzzing. Visby became one of the most important cities in the Middle Ages, with its harbor strategically located in the center of the Baltic region. An estimated 10,000 people lived in Visby at that time, making it one of the biggest cities in the country. Today, the city is divided into two parts: inside and outside the wall. Of the 22,000 people who now live here, fewer than 3,000 live inside the wall.

In order to preserve this old city, all of Visby is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There are strict guidelines on driving within the city wall, partly for environmental reasons but also for practical reasons. During the busy summer months, only locals are permitted to drive inside the wall, and only when it's necessary. The streets are narrow and there are a ridiculous number of bikers, many of them tourists, who don't always watch where they're going.

Sightseeing

❖ The Wall

In the 13th century, a civil war broke out between the townsmen of Visby and the farmers. A wall was constructed to keep the farmers out and protect the city. Most of the wall is still there today, an impressive 3½ km (two miles) long and up to 10 m (30 feet) high. There are three main entrances, Söderport, Österport and Nordeport, and over 50 towers, all of them individually named.

The wall is constantly being repaired, partly because it's old but also because people (tourists) remove stones from it to keep as souvenirs. It is strictly forbidden to take stones from the wall (or the nature reserves on the

island), so resist the temptation. There are many other things you can take home to remember your visit without breaking the law. There are plenty of souvenir shops.

❖ The Rauks

The funny looking limestone creations known as rauks are typical for this province. The neighboring island of Öland also has quite a few rauks but Gotland is more famous for them. The rauks are rock formations of limestone, shaped by erosion from the wind and water for thousands of years. Most are found along the shores of Gotland and the oldest are about 11,000 years old. Fårö at the northernmost tip of Gotland is one of the best places to see them. Gamlehamn, Lauterhorn and Digerhuvud in the western part of Fårö are the most rauk-rich areas on Gotland.

Some of the more famous rauks have names such as Jungfrun (the Virgin), which is the highest rauk on Gotland and can be seen at Lickershamn north of Visby. Most famous of all is the one at the southern tip of Gotland in a place called Hoburgen. The rauk itself is called Hoburgsgubben (the Hoburg Man) and is shaped like the face of an old man. Holms Hällar, just east of Hoburgen, is also an area you shouldn't miss in your search for the rauks.

JUNGFRUN (THE VIRGIN)

The legend behind the highest rauk in Gotland tells about a man named Likajr who placed his daughter, Öllegard, on the top of the rauk and challenged her boyfriend Helge, who was a slave, to climb up and get her. If he did, he would be allowed to marry her. Realizing that the young man was about to accomplish this task, Likajr fired an arrow into Helge's head. Both the boy and the girl crashed into the sea and were never seen again.

❖ Visby Inside the Wall

The city center inside the wall in Visby is not big but quite hilly and you'll get a good workout if you tour it on foot. An option is to take the tour-train, which starts at Österport, one of the main entrances in the wall and the one most centrally located. A train leaves every half-hour and takes about 25 minutes.

Map of Visby, 1500

If you decide to explore the city on your own two feet, come through one of the entrances in the wall and walk along this impressive creation for a while before making your way down toward the center. The best views within the wall are close to the wall itself.

If you enter Österport and go to your right, you'll find some spectacular scenery, with all the old houses and ruins in the city below you and the Baltic Sea beyond it for several miles. Walk to your left from Österport and head south along the wall; you will come to a tower called **Kajsarn**, one of the first towers built in the wall. Kajsarn has had various purposes and, for a couple of centuries, it was the city prison. You can walk up the stairs and enter it to see for yourself as it is now a museum.

Once you've made your way down into the city center you're in a medieval town, with old houses and narrow cobblestoned streets. There are several ruined old churches in Visby. One or two can be worth visiting and **St. Hans Ruin** is at the top of many visitors' lists since there it has an open-air café (see *Places to Eat*).

Strandgatan along the ocean is great for a stroll if the wind is not too strong. For the culturally intrigued, you will also find an interesting museum here, **Fornsalen**, with a large display of treasures from the past.

If shopping is on your agenda, then **Adelsgatan** is your best bet. You will find yourself on this pedestrian street if you enter Söderport and walk straight ahead.

> **Did You Know?** The oldest house in Sweden that is still occupied is in downtown Visby and was built in the middle of the 13th century.

❖ Churches

There are almost 100 churches on Gotland. A long time ago, the island was divided into 92 parishes, each with at least one church. The churches are interesting and each one has its

own unique history. Some of them are big, others small. Some built in wood, others in stone. Drive around and explore on your own; it doesn't matter which ones you choose. In Visby, there are 14 ruined medieval churches that were burned down by the Germans in the 16th century. Most of them were built in the 12th and 13th centuries.

The cathedral in Visby, **Sankta Marias**, was the only church that was spared and is one of the most beautiful cathedrals you will find anywhere. With its three towers, it can be seen from practically anywhere in the city. If you walk up the stairs right beside the church, you will also get one of the best views from inside the wall. Even if only ruins are left of the other churches, they are interesting to explore. One of them, **Sankt Nicolai**, has become a popular place for concerts and festivals such as the Gotland Chamber Music Festival in the summer. Near Stora Torget, the main square, are **Sankt Lars** and **Sankt Drottens**, also known as the "Sister Churches" since they are so close together. Also near one another are **Sankt Hans** and **Sankt Pers** by **Sankt Hansplan Square**, which has a green area where you can sit down and enjoy a cup of coffee. Enter the Sankt Hans Café from the square.

❖ Högklint

One of the best views you can find on the island is at Högklint, a few miles south of Visby. Just don't go too close to the edge, especially on a windy day. There is a drop of 50 m (150 feet) so stay inside the white stakes at all times. From Högklint you can take the stairs leading down to a grassy shelf called **Getsvältan** (the Goat Starvation) since goats used to wander down here for the grass but couldn't make it back and eventually starved to death. This is part of a nature reserve area which is good for hiking. It can make for an exciting hike, not just for the scenery but for the many caves and cavities in the cliffs. One of the caves was supposedly the secret hiding place of a famous robber in the 18th century named Johan Lilja. Feel free to explore the area, but pay close attention as you walk because the terrain can be difficult.

Events

❖ The Medieval Week

The most famous event on Gotland takes place in the beginning of August every year in honor of the Danish king Valdemar Atterdag and his invasion of the island in 1361. Gotland had its glory days

during the Middle Ages but ironically, this week commemorates one of the biggest tragedies that happened here. Admission to these festivities is free, though there is a fee for certain special events. Many dress up in medieval clothes for this week and, if you wish to participate in any of the events, it's a must. Costumes can be rented at the **Modehuset Medeltiden** in Visby, ☎ 0498-271358. If you don't want to dress up but just be a spectator, that's fine too.

Beaches

There are 800 km (500 miles) of coastline on Gotland, long stretches of which are white sandy beaches. Combine this with the favorable climate and you have one of the main reasons for Gotland's popularity. **Tofta**, south of Visby, is probably the most famous of all the beaches and has a crowded camping site next to it. It's the most popular beach on Gotland, partly because of the beach itself, but also for its proximity to Visby and the amenities nearby. For all beach bums and campers there is a restaurant and a kiosk in the area and for those in need of some adventure, try visiting the **Viking Village**, around the corner. It's open every day during peak season and appeals mostly to the kids, but adults who are children at heart are welcome too.

In the north, **Sudersand** on Fårö is the most popular beach. Don't confuse the name with Storsudret, the peninsula in the south of Gotland, although that area has some great beaches too. **Holms Hällar**, in the southeast corner of Storsudret, has one of the best.

Excursions

Lilla & Stora Karlsö

On the west coast of Gotland, 30 minutes south of Visby, there is a nature reserve just south of Klintehamn. It was in this area that the Danish king Valdemar Atterdag and his men supposedly reached Gotland in 1361 before heading up the coast to conquer Visby. But people come here today so they can take the boat out to one of the two islands just off the coast, Lilla Karlsö and Stora Karlsö.

Stora Karlsö is the second-oldest national park in the world, after Yellowstone, and is famous for its rich birdlife. The best way to learn about the history and nature of Stora Karlsö is through the guided tour provided to those taking the boat trip from Klintehamn. The tour is free for those taking the boat (or included in the price, depending on how you look at it) and will take you to the museum, the old lighthouse and around the island. The whole experience can seem a bit touristy and, if you want to avoid all that, **Lilla Karlsö** is probably a better choice for you. Lilla Karlsö has a more barren landscape with bigger caves and more rauks. You have the opportunity to spend the night here as well but, unlike Stora Karlsö, there is no restaurant, so you have to bring your own food.

❖ Plant & Animal Life

Many botanists and ornithologists have found their paradise here on the Karlsö Islands, which actually used to be named the Bird Islands. There are an estimated 240 different kinds of birds on Stora Karlsö and the most commonly found are guillemots. There are over 10,000 of these black and white birds, hard to believe if you consider that they were practically extinct some 100 years ago. Eagles and some of the other big predators are also known to make appearances from time to time. There are 600 species of plants and late spring-early summer is a great time to see all the orchids that cover the island.

Lilla Karlsö's plant and animal life is less diverse, but it does have hundreds of wandering sheep. Gotland is famous for its many sheep, something you'll understand when you first arrive in Visby and see the sheep sculptures everywhere in town. The Gotland sheep, right, are an ancient breed where even the females have horns.

❖ Getting Here

Stora Karlsö can be reached from the harbor in Klintehamn, 30 km (18 miles) south of Visby on Road 140. Daily departures are from the beginning of May to the middle of September, leaving at 10 am and returning from Stora Karlsö at 3:30

pm. From May 15 to August 8, there is also a boat leaving at 11:30 am, which returns at 5 pm. The trip takes 30 minutes and costs 200 kr/$22 (100 kr for children under 16). A guided tour is included in the price.

- For bookings call **Stora Karlsö Jakt & Djurskyddsförening**, ☎ 0498-240500 or e-mail boka@storakarlso.se.

If you want to spend more than just half a day out on the islands, skip the boat back in the afternoon and spend the night. Just make sure there is space available.

The boats to Lilla Karlsö depart from Djupvik 10 minutes farther down from Klintehamn on Road 140. From mid-May to mid-August, the 30-minute trip leaves once a day at 10 am.

- For bookings call the contact person for trips to Lilla Karlsö, Björn Hjernquist, ☎ 0498-485248 or e-mail bjorn.hjernquist@snf.se.

Gotska Sandön

Before 1996, foreign tourists were not allowed on Gotska Sandön, the most isolated of islands in the Baltic Sea. The island is 38 km (25 miles) northwest of Gotland and is the perfect place for those who want to get away and find some peace and quiet. The whole island is a national park and has, as the name indicates, long sandy beaches and a tranquil environment. In the past, Gotska Sandön was inhabited by farmers, shepherds and lighthouse-keepers. According to the legend, it was also a place where pirates hung out and hid their treasures.

To get to Gotska Sandön, there are boats from Nynäshamn on the mainland and Fårösund on Gotland between May 14 and September 5. The trip from Nynäshamn takes three hours and from Fårösund, one hour and 45 minutes. Interestingly, there is no harbor on the island. The boat approaches the shore on the north side close enough for people to walk onboard. Of course, on a windy day that may not be possible, in which case a rubber dingy is used as transportation for the last stretch.

There are a few things to keep in mind while planning your trip. Nobody lives on the island and there are no shops of any kind. Since boats only arrive and depart three days a week (sometimes less frequently, depending on the weather), you need to bring enough food to last a few days. As you might have guessed, there are no hotels here either, but there are several options for accommodations. You can bring your own tent, or rent a cabin – private or shared. There is electricity and running water in the cabins and if you pay a couple of hundred kr extra for your own cabin, you also get a private kitchen.

Trips must be booked in advance with **Resestugan**, ☎ 0498-240450. They can reserve both the boat and accommodation.

Adventures

Most activities on Gotland are only possible during peak season. This is generally between June and August. Unless otherwise specified, this is when you can expect attractions mentioned in the text below to be available.

Cultural Adventure

❖ Roma Theater

One of the major landmarks on Gotland is the monastery in Roma, just a short drive east of Visby on Road 143. It's not quite like Rome and the Coliseum, but the Roma Monastery is well worth a visit. Today, there is only a ruin left of this 12th-century building, which someone apparently thought would be the perfect setting for thatrical productions. Every summer for the last couple of decades, a Shakespeare play has been staged here. Classic plays such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Nights Dream* have been performed here since 1989.

Tickets can be purchased at the **Visby Tourist Office**, ☎ 0498-201700, or at **Roma Kungsgård**, ☎ 0498-50336. The cost is about 275 kr/$30.

On Foot

❖ The Lummelunda Cave

If you take Road 149 from Visby going north for 13 km (nine miles), you'll reach the Lummelunda Cave (Lummelundagrottan). There is an old saying among cave experts (speleologists) – the best

way to preserve a cave is to never find it. Unfortunately, Lummelunda was discovered over 50 years ago and draws hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. This makes it the biggest tourist attraction on Gotland. It is also one of the few caves in Sweden not in the mountains up north. The cave is four km (2.4 miles) long and divided into two parts, one for tourists and one for adventurers. While the tourist section is a pleasant walk in an illuminated area, the adventure portion goes through water and narrow passages. A tour in the adventure section needs to be booked in advance and costs 480 kr/$51. For the claustrophobic or those afraid of the dark, or perhaps for those who want to save some money, the tourist section costs 70 kr/$7.50 to enter. The cave is open between May and September. ☎ 0498-273050.

❖ Hiking

You can basically walk anywhere on Gotland. There are no right or wrong places, just different ones. The north has generally a barren landscape, the middle region, a lot of vegetation, while the south offers open landscapes. Take your pick, although the island is not so big that you have to make a choice. If you have a few days, you can cover at least one hike in each part. Here are a few options that I would recommend.

Pilgrimsleden

Pilgrimsleden, the Pilgrimage Trail, takes you from Visby in the west to St. Olofsholm in the east. **St. Olofsholm** is a well-known village, where the Norwegian king Olof Haraldsson arrived on his ship to convert the people of Gotland to Christianity.

Klintkusten

The steep cliffs in northwestern Gotland, north of Visby, provide a dramatic hike with some incredible scenery. If starting in Visby, the trail will take you mostly along the barren shoreline as you walk up the coast, before reaching **Hallshuk**, with perhaps the best view anywhere on Gotland. Hallshuk is a ledge with a drop of 30 m (100 feet) and the ocean right below you. If you get here just before sunset, you've timed it perfectly.

Storsudret

This southern peninsula is a great place for any activity and that would include hiking. Buses go daily from Visby to **Burgsvik** which is the main community. There are a few

stores and restaurants in this town, which makes it a good place to start your hike. This area is quite open and the best walks are along the sea but the nature reserves a bit inland are also nice.

Fårö

The island of Fårö at the northern tip of Gotland is an excellent place for hiking. Fårö is 20 km (12 miles) long and eight km (4.8 miles) wide. It has a good mix of sandy beaches in the east, barren landscape in the west, with the famous rauk area, and a forest in the central part of the island. Boats depart from Fårösund at least every half-hour and are free of charge. There's also a hostel in Sudersand at the northern tip, plus cabins and a camping site. Many people like to rent out rooms in their homes.

On Water

❖ Kayak Rentals

Sudrets Kajakcentrum, ☎ 0498-498084 or 0735-974630, www.suderkajak.se, is on the south coast of Sudret near Vändburg and Holm Hällar.

On Wheels

❖ Biking

Bike excursions are the most popular way to see Gotland. The island is flat and easy to get around. One exception is when you're biking along the coast and sometimes have to deal with the strong winds coming in from the ocean. There is a bike trail called **Gotlandsleden** that goes all the way along the coast of Gotland.

Traffic tends to get busy in the summers. There are a lot of cars on the roads and not all of them are paying attention to other vehicles. Take designated biking trails or smaller roads whenever possible. Maps are available at the tourist offices.

For information about bike rentals, see *Getting Around*, page 150.

❖ Train Ride

There is no longer a railroad on Gotland, at least not for public transportation. You can, however, visit **Dalhem** in the middle of the island, east of Visby and join a sightseeing tour pulled by an old steam engine. The engine is 90 years old and there is a chance that it might break down, in which case it takes a few days to repair it. If the train is not in service, you can always rent a **trolley** at the **Railway Café**. The railway museum here is also worth a visit. To get here from Visby take Road 147 toward Slite; after a few km you will see a sign that says Dalhem 17, where you turn right.

Places to Stay & Eat

You can never go wrong with seafood on Gotland but, other than that, there are some typical dishes that you should try. One is the **saffron-pancake**, a thick and rich pancake served with jam and whipped cream. You'll find it in many cafés around Gotland and, if you happen to be in Visby, stop by **Rosas Café** on St. Hansgatan, a classic café.

HOTEL PRICES SWEDEN	
For double room including taxes. For hostels with no double rooms, price is per bed in dormitory.	
$	Under 300 kr ($39)
$$	300-600 kr ($39-$78)
$$$	601-1,200 kr ($40-$156)
$$$$	Over 1,200 kr ($156+)

Stora Karlsö has both a restaurant and accommodation. It was voted Hostel of the Year in 2004 and charges 195 kr/$21. You can also stay in **Karlsöbädd**, a B&B located in the lighthouse, for 330 kr/$35. To book accommodation, call Stora Karlsö Jakt & Djurskyddsförening, ☎ 0498-240500. Call ☎ 0498-241019 for the restaurant.

Visby Hotel, Strandgatan 6, Visby, ☎ 0498-257500, $$$$. Built in 1855, it was completely refurbished in 1991 and is today one of the most exclusive hotels on Gotland. It's in the

town center not far from the harbor and has 134 rooms and suites on four floors.

RESTAURANT PRICES SWEDEN	
For one main course & a beverage, including taxes.	
$	Less than 75 kr ($10)
$$	75-150 kr ($10-$20)
$$$	151-200 kr ($21-$25)
$$$$	Over 200 kr ($25+)

Hotel Gute, Mellangatan 29, Visby, ☎ 0498-202260, $$$. Centrally located inside the wall with easy access to shopping, cafés and restaurants. Newly renovated but it still has the charm of an older hotel.

Fridhem, Visby (seven km/4.8 miles south of the city near Högklint), ☎ 0498-296018, $$$. Pleasant and peaceful, this place was actually founded by a princess in the 19th century. Eugénie was the only daughter of King Oskar I and suffered from a cold, so her doctors advised her to spend some time on Gotland. When she came here in 1860, she grew fond of the island and particularly the area around Högklint, where she decided to build a house. The princess was a talented artist and Fridhem became something of an art center, which attracted many visitors. She spent 29 summers here and even today the house is part-hostel and part-museum thanks to the current owners, who have preserved many of Princess Eugénie's belongings. The hostel has a high capacity but is naturally popular in the summer so book well in advance during peak season.

Grannen, Grannbyn, Lärbro, ☎ 0498-225786, $$. Grannen is a combination of restaurant and hostel, situated in Lärbro in the northern part of Gotland, with wonderful natural surroundings. The hostel has 120 beds and the rooms can accommodate up to four people. The restaurant serves à la carte and has an extensive pizza menu.

Toftagården, Visby, ☎ 0498-297000, www.toftagarden.se, $-$$$. At Toftagården you can rent cabins, apartments or hotel rooms. It's just south of Visby on Road 140 towards Klintehamn.

STF Hostel on Fårö, Fårögården, ☎ 0498-223639, $, near Sudersand on the northern part of Fårö, the island to the north of Gotland. The area is secluded but you have the beach and amenities nearby. Bike rental is also offered here. The hostel is open from mid-May to the end of August.

Rosas Café, St. Hansgatan 22, Visby, ☎ 0498-213514, $. Rosas is always worth a visit, especially in summer when you can sit in the garden and enjoy their famous pancakes. There is also a room to rent out.

St. Hans Café, St. Hans Plan 2, Visby, ☎ 0498-210772, $. Not far from Rosas in the center of Visby. It has a spacious outdoor area, in an old ruin.

■ Stockholm

Introduction

Stockholm is regarded as one of the most beautiful capitals in the world and it's not hard to see why. It is built on 14 islands and is in between Lake Mälaren in the west and the Baltic Sea in the East. Nearly one third of the total area of Stockholm is parks and green areas, with about one-third water. In addition, the buildings are old and well preserved since Stockholm was one of the few big cities in Europe that was not destroyed during World War II. It is a clean city, with less pollution than virtually any other city of similar size in the world. The water is so clean that you can go for a swim downtown; fishing is popular from one of the 55 bridges connecting the islands that make up the city.

ORIGIN OF THE NAME

Nobody knows for sure how the name Stockholm originated but the word *stock* is Swedish for log and *holm* means island. The city, when it was founded, was just an island (today known as Gamla Stan or Old Town) and many historians believe that wooden logs were put up around this island as protection.

Another legend tells us that Sigtuna, a city north of Stockholm which then functioned as the capital of Sweden, was attacked by Estonian pirates. The people of Sigtuna sent all their valuables away on logs into the lake saying that wherever those logs ended up is where they would build their new capital. The logs turned up at Riddarholmen, adjacent to Gamla Stan, which is how Stockholm, according to this story, got its name.

Brief History

In 2002, Stockholm celebrated 750 years as a city. Although we can't be sure when Stockholm officially became a city, the earliest document where Stockholm is mentioned is from 1252, signed by Birger Jarl, who is generally regarded as the city's founder. The Germans and their Hanseatic League had tremendous power in those days and a great deal of influence over decision-making in Stockholm. Stockholm and Sweden would grow and become more independent and two important events that helped this cause were the Battle of Brunkeberg in 1471 and the revolution by Gustav Vasa in 1523 (see below, page 167). By the 17th century, town planners expanded the city limits outside the medieval city center that we today call the Old Town (Gamla Stan). But it would take a while until Stockholm would turn into the clean and beautiful city that it is today. Between the 15th and the 18th centuries, times were tough in the capital. The Plague and other diseases, along with several big fires, made life difficult for most people.

It wasn't all misery, however. The 17th century was an era of great achievements for Sweden with a powerful military and many successful battles. But perhaps too much focus was on international affairs. Most of the budget and production of goods were channeled to the military and Stockholm was still just a poor and dirty small town, clearly not representative of a rising empire. The town planning and expansion of the city limits would encourage people to move here from the rural areas of Sweden and the population increased from about 10,000 to nearly 60,000 people in the 17th century. This was despite famines, fires and diseases, which were quite common. The city's prosperity steadily increased.

The 18th century was a time of many scientific achievements in Stockholm. King Gustav III, who was a great advocate of science, art, architecture and literature, founded the Dramatic Theatre and the Swedish Academy, the institution that awards the Nobel Prize for literature. In the 19th century, industries and many new technological advancements and inventions led to better times.

Stockholm
N
HUNTER PUBLISHING
500 METERS
Karlbergsvägen
Odengatan
Dalagatan
Torsgatan
Sankt Eriksgatan
Klarastrandsleden
Scheelegatan
Fleminggatan
KUNGSHOLMEN
NORRMALM
Sveavägen
Birgerlarisgatan
Olof Palmesgatan
Kungsgatan
Kungsbron
Mäster Samuelsgatan
Norrlandsgatan
Klarabergsviadukten
Strömgatan
Stadshus
Centralbron
Vasabron
Stortskajen
RIDDAR-HOLMEN
GAMLA STAN
Riddarfjärden
Söder Mälarstrand
Centralbron
Hornsgatan
SÖDERMALM
Linnégatan
ÖSTERMALM
Valhallavägen
Karlavägen
Oxenstiernsgatan
Styrmansgatan
Narvavägen
Strandvägen
Ladugårdslandsviken
DJURGÅRDEN
Skeppsholmsbron
SKEPPSHOLMEN
Djurgårdsvägen
Strömmen
KASTELL-HOLMEN
BECK-HOLMEN
Stadsgardsleden
Katarinavägen
Saltsjön
Londonviadukten
Folkungagatan
1. Kastellet
2. Arkitekturmuséet; Modernamuséet; Östasiatiskmuséet; Skeppsholmen Kyrkan; Svenskfarm
3. Nordiskamuséet; Vasamuséet; Galärkyrkogården; Biologiskamuséet; Aquariavattenmuseum; Spårvagnshall; Djurgårdskyrkan; Gröna Lunds Tivoli; Tobaksmuséet
4. Engelska Kyrkan
5. Nobelparken
6. Oskarskyrka
7. Historiskamuséet
8. Marie Bebådelsekyrkan
9. Maximteatern
10. To Ekoparken Nationalstadspark; Statens Sjöhistoriskamuseum; Telemuseum; Tekniskamuséet; Teknorama; Folkensmuseum Etnografiska
11. Gamla Stan
12. Riddarholmen
13. Stockholmstadsmuséet
14. Folkoperan
15. Riksdagshuset
16. Central Stockholm
17. Stadshuset
18. Kungsholmskyrka
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Gustav Vasa & the Stockholm Bloodbath

Of all the monarchs in Sweden's history, Gustav Vasa, left, had the most impact on the history of Stockholm and probably on the entire country. Vasa was one of the biggest opponents of the Danish King Kristian II and his regime. Because of that he was captured and imprisoned in Denmark. Sweden, Denmark and Norway had formed a union in 1397 but most Swedes were displeased with this and claimed independence. In 1520, King Kristian had marched into Stockholm to regain power. He was already king of the union and was now crowned king of Sweden by the archbishop. The king hosted a party to celebrate and invited Stockholm's most prominent people such as councilors, noblemen and priests. None of them liked their new king but were promised amnesty if they cooperated with him, so they did. Little did they suspect that they were all walking into a trap. On the third and last day of the party, Kristian broke his promise and sentenced them all to death. The official reason was that they were all behind the Swedish leader Sten Sture, but in reality, King Kristian just wanted to get rid of his opposition. The executions took place on the main square, Stortorget, where about 80 people were beheaded, an event that became known as Stockholm's Bloodbath.

Among the noblemen who were executed were Gustav Vasa's father and a few other relatives. With some help from the Germans, Vasa managed to escape and eventually made it to Dalarna in central Sweden where he could gather enough men to take on the king in Stockholm (read more about this historic journey under Vasaloppet in the Dalarna chapter, page 199). The Germans would rather see Vasa as the king than Kristian who opposed the Hanseatic League. They believed the young nobleman Vasa would be a weaker ruler and easier to control. As it turned out, they were sadly mistaken.

June 6, 1523, when Vasa and his men marched into the city, would become a historic day. The revolution was a success and Vasa was crowned king, which put an end to the union and made Stockholm the official capital of Sweden. He would start a new dynasty and, in his 37 years in power, made sure that Sweden, not Denmark or Germany, was in control of its own destiny. Vasa also supported the Lutheran faith in a reformation of 1527, which became the official religion in the country. To ensure that the throne would stay in the family, Vasa had nine children. Three of them would later become kings but they constantly rebelled against each other and fought for the throne. But that is another story.

Getting Here

By Plane

As the capital and biggest city, Stockholm is where you arrive if coming by plane from abroad. There are two main airports in the area, Arlanda and Bromma. **Arlanda**, ☎ 08-7976000, is the biggest airport in Sweden and where most international flights take off and land. If you land at Arlanda, you can take a train, **Arlanda Express**, or a bus to the Central Station. Arlanda Express takes only 20 minutes and costs 180 kr/$19. The airport buses take a bit longer, about 40 minutes, but only cost 89 kr/$9.50. If you prefer a taxi instead, you should always demand a fixed price which shouldn't be more than 400 kr$43.

By Bus & Train

From most places in Sweden you can get here with direct connections by either bus or train. The advantage over flying is that the central train and bus stations are downtown and you don't have to spend extra time and money on transportation from the airport. Even from remote cities in Sweden, the total travel time to the city center can be shorter by train. There are direct train connections with Copenhagen and Oslo. Contact **SJ**, the national train company of Sweden, at ☎ 0771-757575, www.sj.se or www.resplus.se.

One of the biggest national bus companies is **Swebus**, ☎ 0200-218218, www.swebusexpress.se, with connections to Gothenburg, Norrköping and Mora, to name a few. S**venska**

Buss, ☎ 0771-676767, www.svenskabuss.se, has buses to Malmö, Karlskrona, Växjö and Gothenburg. In addition, there are many smaller local companies in the various provinces in Sweden that take you to Stockholm.

By Car

From southern Sweden, the **E4 highway**, starting in Helsingborg just north of Malmö, leads to the capital. The E4 then continues all the way up to Haparanda by the Finnish border. The travel time from Malmö is just over six hours, from Gothenburg about five hours and from Haparanda, an eternity.

By Boat

Ferry connections with Helsinki and Turku in Finland from Värtahamnen can be made through **Silja Line**, ☎ 08-222140, www.silja.com, and from Tegelvikshamnen on Södermalm with **Viking Line**, ☎ 08-4524000, www.vikingline.se.

Getting Around

By Bus & Subway

The subway is a quick and convenient way of getting around. The bad thing is that you don't get the view (unless you travel to the suburbs). Buses are good supplements and have their own lanes so they're not as affected by traffic as cars. Stockholm used to be equipped with trams just like Gothenburg, but they abolished that system, something many wish they hadn't done. There still is one route left, however, between Norrmalmstorg and Djurgården. For more information about bus and subway traffic, ☎ 08-6001000, www.sl.se. Also look under *Guided Tours*, page 179, for more options on getting around by bus.

By Car

Avoid driving within the city limits as much as you can. The traffic can be pretty bad and there are lots of one-way streets and dead-ends. Parking is also expensive, if you can even find a space. The multi-storey car parks are your best bet but they are also the most expensive.

Car Rental Companies

- Avis, ☎ 020-788200 or 08-202060
- Hertz, ☎ 020-211211

❖ Taxi Services

Illegal taxi drivers have become an increasing problem in the city when getting a cab on the streets, especially late at night and on weekends. You may get lucky and get to your destination with one of these, but it's not worth taking the chance. Robberies and rapes are reported on a regular basis by people who have used them so always make sure you choose a licensed company such as the three listed below.

- Taxi Stockholm, ☎ 08-150000
- Taxi, ☎ 020-939393
- Taxi Kurir, ☎ 08-300000

By Boat

Ferries depart for the archipelago from two places in the city, Strömkajen and Nybroviken. There are others used for transportation within the city limits as well. For more information about boat tours in and around the city, look under *The Archipelago*, page 186, and for tours used strictly for sightseeing, look under *Guided Tours*, page 179.

By Bike

Maybe it sounds a bit risky to bike your way around a big city like Stockholm but it's safer than you may think. There's a wide network of bicycle trails, but the best places to bike are in Ekoparken, the national city park in the eastern section of town. Read more about this park, including places to rent bikes, in the *Parks* section, page 178.

Orientation & Sightseeing

Stockholm is, with its 750,000 inhabitants, by far the biggest city in Sweden. But, on an international scale, it's not overwhelming in size for a visitor. Finding your way around the city is quite easy, but have a map handy at all times. Stockholm is

one of few cities in Sweden big enough to get lost in if you don't know your way around. The good news is that many of the city's districts are also islands. If you know which island you are on, you should be able to orient yourself. Only three of the districts, Norrmalm, Vasastan and Östermalm, all adjacent to each other, are not on an island.

INSIDE THE TOLLS

The downtown area consists of what local residents usually refer to as "Inside the Tollgates." There used to be a time when people, farmers mainly, had to pay tolls to enter the city. Although that was a long time ago, the name remains and the the places where the tollgates used to be still make up the border of the city center. Some examples are Norrtull in the north and Skanstull in the south.

The biggest island is **Södermalm**, connected in the north with **Gamla Stan** (Old Town). Södermalm used to be a district for the working class, but today it is one of the most popular places to live and visit. When you cross the bridge from Gamla Stan you have the famous **Slussen** lock directly underneath.

One of the best views in town is from **Katarinahissen** by the Slussen. This elevator became a huge attraction when it was inaugurated in 1883. In those days, before Kaknästornet and the City Hall were built, it was the best view anyone could get in the city and may actually still be today. If it suits your schedule, try to combine the view here with a meal at the restaurant Gondolen.

SLUSSEN

Slussen, the lock that separates Lake Mälaren from the Baltic Sea, is officially named Karl Johan Slussen, after the first Swedish king of the current royal dynasty. His real name was Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, a French General who married a former fiancé of Napoleon's. When Sweden needed a new monarch after King Karl XIII had failed to pro-

duce an heir to the throne, Bernadotte was called upon to take over. He was crowned king in 1818 and became officially known as Karl XIV Johan. Interestingly, he never learned to speak Swedish in his 26 years as the king of Sweden.

North of Gamla Stan is the city center. The black and white square called **Sergels Torg** is considered the center of the city and is just a short walk from the Central Train Station and Bus Terminal. **Kulturhuset**, with its glass exterior and the tall glass pillar in the adjacent roundabout are two famous landmarks in Stockholm, both next to Sergels Torg, and easily recognized.

Just north of here is **Norrmalm**, which in the early 17th century was a separate city, named Norra Förstaden (the Northern Suburb). Today it is a vibrant part of downtown. **Vasastan**, connected to Norrmalm in the west, is a little quieter and mainly residential.

THE STOCKHOLM CARD

Stockholm was actually the first city to start issuing discount cards for visitors. The Stockholm Card costs 220 kr/$23.50 for one day and gives you free entrance to about 70 museums and other attractions. In addition, you will get unlimited access to all public transportations and some sightseeing tours.

Östermalm to the east is the upper-class area, with expensive apartments, shops and restaurants. Some of the most expensive apartments in the city are located on **Strandvägen** at the south end. At the end of the 19th century, this street was one of the worst slum areas in town, where homeless people and prostitutes hung out. So times have changed a bit since then.

Kungsholmen, with the Stockholm City Hall as the big landmark, is the island to the west of the city center. It's a popular place to live, especially with younger people. Kungsholmen is a quiet area and not the first place to recommend for shopping, dining or nightlife. It's still worth spending a few hours sightseeing here while you're in the neighborhood visiting the city hall – which is an absolute must when you're in Stockholm.

The Nobel Prize

The Nobel Foundation was established in 1900 based on the wishes of Alfred Nobel in his last will and testament. Nobel was an exceptional scientist and inventor who received 355 patents in his career, one of them for the invention of dynamite. When Nobel died in 1896, there was great confusion as to whether his will was legally valid. Eventually, in 1900, the Nobel Foundation was established and December 10, the date Nobel had died, became the date for the ceremonies. The prizes in Physics, Chemistry, Economics, Medicine and Literature are awarded by academies in Stockholm. The Nobel Peace Prize, however, is traditionally decided and handed out by a committee in Norway. The reason for this is that in Nobel's days, Sweden and Norway formed a union, which didn't dissolve until 1905, five years after the Foundation was established.

The City Hall

Yes, visiting city hall is a touristy thing and is probably avoided as much by Stockholm natives as the Statue of Liberty is by New Yorkers for that reason. But they don't know what they're missing. The city hall is worth every bit of your time and effort.

Many might think that the best view in the city is from Kaknästornet, the tower on Djurgården, since it's the tallest

building. But the city hall is one of the prime spots to see this great city from above, with the possible exception of a hot air balloon. The building is 106 m (300 feet) high, which is one meter higher than the Copenhagen City Hall. Originally, it was designed to be the same height; when the architect of the Stockholm City Hall discovered this, he added an extra meter.

But the city hall is more than just a great view; it is also the home to the Nobel Prize ceremonies every year in December. This event takes place in Blå Hallen, one of the many impressive rooms you can see when you take the guided tour. Guided tours are offered every hour on the hour between 10 am and 3 pm in the summer and at 10 am and noon in the winter. Keep in mind that you must take a guided tour to enter; it is not possible to walk around on your own.

Gamla Stan

The district of Gamla Stan, meaning Old Town, constituted the entire city in the mid-13th century. The land has risen since then, making the island much bigger than it was. In the 14th century, a wall was erected surrounding the two streets Österlånggatan and Västerlånggatan with the sea directly on the other side. You can see how much the island has grown since then when walking outside of these streets.

What we today refer to as Gamla Stan is usually only the main island called Stadsholmen, Helgeandsholmen where the Parliament building is and the tiny island of Strömsborg. Riddarholmen, however, which is attached to Stadsholmen to the west, is its own district.

❖ Sightseeing in Gamla Stan

Gamla Stan is the biggest tourist trap in the city but you shouldn't come here primarily for the shops and restaurants. If you instead just walk around and look at it as a big museum, it will be the most memorable time of your visit in the nation's capital. The islands aren't big but you can easily, if you have the time, spend an entire day here without getting bored. The first thing you will encounter if you walk across the bridge from the city center is the **Royal Palace**. There are several bridges you can cross from the city center to get here and, if you're coming from Drottninggatan or Gustav Adolfs Torg, you will

automatically walk past the **Riksdag**, or Parliament Building, on Helgeandsholmen.

> **Did You Know?** The Parliament building actually used to be a mental hospital. Some might think that not much has changed since those days, though we no longer call the people in there mental patients (at least not to their faces).

Storkyrkan, the cathedral, is next to the palace and is worth a visit. This is the oldest church in Stockholm and inside is the oldest wooden statue in northern Europe. The statue is called ***St. Göran and the Dragon***, carved in 1489 to commemorate the Battle of Brunkeberg in 1471 when the Swedish leader Sten Sture and his troops defeated the Danish troops and gained control over the capital. Continue down towards Stortorget, the main square, where the Stockholm Bloodbath took place in 1520 (read more about this under *History*, page 167). The **Stock Exchange building** is here in an impressive building from 1776 that also contains the Nobel Library.

Take one of the streets leading to the southern end of Stadsholmen, for example Prästgatan, running parallel to the shopping street Västerlånggatan. Look for **Mårten Trotzigs Gränd** on your right side, the narrowest street in the city, only 90 cm (three feet) wide in some places. The alley will take you to **Järntorget** (the iron square), which got its name in the Middle Ages when trading iron was one of the biggest businesses in the city.

The Royal Palace

The Palace became the home for royal families for two centuries, starting with King Adolf Fredrik in the mid-18th century. Even today it is called "the official residence of His Majesty the King," though, technically, the present king, Carl XVI Gustaf, lives in Drottningholm Castle just outside the city. The unique thing about the Royal Palace is that it's open to the public. Visitors are not allowed inside the entire building but there are many interesting rooms, such as the Treasury and the Royal Armory, that can be visited. And don't

miss the **Museum Tre Kronor**, which gives you a fascinating insight into the palace in the Middle Ages.

It is no coincidence that the Royal Palace is here. The location was the natural choice to build a fortress over 700 years ago as it was the best place on Stadsholmen to survey the surrounding area. The fortress eventually turned into the palace called Tre Kronor, where Gustav Vasa and many other kings lived before it was burned to the ground in 1697. After the disastrous fire, a new palace had to be built and the respected architect Tessin was the man asked by Hedvig Eleonora to create the plans. Hedvig Eleonora was the widow of Karl X Gustav, the mother of Karl XI and grandmother of Karl XII. It was for the latter, who became king of Sweden at age 15 only months before Tre Kronor was destroyed, that the palace was built. But the young king had other plans and left Sweden a few years later to conquer the world, never returning to his native city. Lack of money, mainly due to the many wars, delayed the construction of the palace, which wasn't completed until 1754.

> **Tip:** Unless shopping for souvenirs is your main goal, avoid Västerlånggatan where you will only get in the way of Japanese photographers. Instead, take Prästgatan, running parallel, and get a real sense of what Gamla Stan was like several centuries ago.

Practical Information

Tourist Offices

The **Sweden House**, opposite NK department store on Hamngatan is where the main tourist office is located. There is also one in the basement of **Kulturhuset** by Sergels Torg. Another tourist information center is at the **Central Station**. ☎ 08-50828508 or 08-7892490.

> **Tip:** Pick up a copy of the *What's On*, a guide with tips on events in town offered when you are there.

Shopping

The biggest shopping area is in the city center around **Sergels Torg**. **Drottninggatan** is a pedestrian street where the shops are lined up one after another. **NK** on Hamngatan was the first department store in Sweden, built in 1915 and inspired by American architecture. Nowadays, the stores in NK are independent and rent their spaces; you will find most of what you need under one roof here. Most of the stores at NK are quite expensive but you can also find some good deals here.

DROTTNINGGATAN

Drottninggatan, "the Queen Street," was named after Queen Kristina, who inherited the throne at age six after her father, King Gustav II Adolf, died in battle in 1632. The king spent most of his life strengthening and defending the Swedish empire. He believed strongly in the Lutheran religion and fought many battles in order to maintain that faith in northern Europe. Ironically, Kristina would later abdicate her throne and move to Rome after converting to Catholicism.

The most exclusive shopping area can be found on **Biblioteksgatan**, between Stureplan and Norrmalmstorg, with stores like Gant, Gucci and Armani. **Södermalm** has many nice stores where you can find some really good deals, especially in design and handicrafts. **Götgatan** and **Hornsgatan** are two of the best streets on Södermalm for shopping; you'll find them both just as you cross the bridge from Gamla Stan. But Gamla Stan is the biggest tourist trap in town and, unless you're looking for a high-priced T-shirt with a Swedish flag on the front and a "made in Taiwan" label in the neck, shopping here should be avoided.

There are three **market halls** in the city and they are well worth visiting, not only for shopping but also for their restaurants. The best one is **Saluhallen** at Östermalmstorg, which has some really good fish restaurants that are not too expensive either. The other two are **Kungshallen** by Hötorget and **Söderhallarna** by Medborgarplatsen. **Hötorget** has been a busy place of commerce for several centuries and, with its central location, a natural meeting place. Flowers, fruits and vegetables are sold here at the stands covering the whole square during the day, which gives you a feeling of being in a country much farther south (unless it's freezing cold).

The Parks

One third of Stockholm is parks and green areas and they add as much beauty to the city as the water does. Spending time in a park doesn't necessarily mean just sitting on a bench, having a picnic or walking around enjoying nature. Although that is not a bad way of spending an afternoon, the parks in Stockholm offer so much more. The most central park with a green area is **Humlegården**, just north of Stureplan. **Kungsträdgården** is even more central and filled with activities such as concerts in the summer and in the winter it's a popular place for ice-skating.

And then, there's **Ekoparken**, the first National City Park in the world, established in 1995. Ekoparken is made up of several sections. One of the areas that make up Ekoparken, **Djurgården**, is especially popular with visitors and local residents. Djurgården itself is divided into two parts, a southern and a northern. The southern part is the island where some of the most famous attractions in the city are located, such as the open-air museum **Skansen**, the amusement park **Gröna Lund**, and the **Vasa Museum**. The northern section includes **Ladugårdsgärdet**, where the **TV-tower Kaknästornet**, the highest building in Stockholm, is located, and continues into the residential area Gärdet.

The king of Sweden received Djurgården as a gift from a monastery in the 15th century. Since then, monarchs used the grounds here for hunting over generations. Djurgården has been the site of many summer royal residences.

To reach Djurgården, either take bus 47 from the center, the boat from Nybroviken or Gamla Stan or the old tram from Norrmalmstorg. Or why not walk it, which from the city center shouldn't take more than 20 minutes.

Besides Djurgården there are two other royal parks in Ekoparken: **Haga** and **Ulriksdal**. Compared to the busy island of Djurgården with all its museums and typical tourist attractions, these are more tranquil areas. Some of the attractions here include **Ulriksdal Castle**, **Gustav III Pavilion** and the **Botanical Garden**, all worth visiting.

Good ways to explore Ekoparken are on foot or bike, but it's also a good idea to take a **boat tour**, for example **Stora Ekoparksturen**, since the price includes free admission to some of the attractions in the area. Boats depart from Strömkajen next to the Grand Hotel. For more information and bookings, ☎ 08-58714020. Also check with some of the companies mentioned under *Guided Tours*, page 179. **Fjäderholmarna**, the nearest part of the archipelago from the city, is just east of Djurgården and also a part of Ekoparken. Boats depart from Slussen and Nybroplan and take only 20-25 minutes.

Bike Rentals

Renting a bike costs about 60 kr/$6.50 per hour and starts at 200 kr/$21 for the whole day. You can get discounted prices if you rent for several days.

- **Djurgårdens Sjöcafé**, Galärvarvsvägen 2, ☎ 08-6605757, also rents out pedal-boats, canoes, in-lines and rowboats.
- **Rent a Bike**, Strandvägen, Pier nr 24, between Nybroplan and Djurgården, ☎ 08-6607959, open May-September.

Guided Tours

City Sightseeing: This is a company that has been around for a long time and offers guided tours with buses, bikes and even horse and carriage. Some of the tours include the historical tour, "Stockholm Then and Now," and the combined bus and boat tour called "Stockholm in a Nutshell," ☎ 08-58714020.

Open Top Tours: These are the classic double-deckers with open tops that you find in most big cities around Europe. The Stockholm tour takes you through most famous sights in the city center and through Gamla Stan and Djurgården. You'll get your own headphones, available in eights different languages. The ticket is valid for 24 hours so you can get off and on at any of the various stops along the way.

Sightseeing by Boat: Perhaps the best way to discover a city built on islands. Many different routes to choose from, even one that takes you out in the famous archipelago. Most of them depart from either Strömkajen by Grand Hotel or Nybrokajen. ☎ 08-58714020.

RIB Sightseeing: Departs every day from Skeppsbrokajen outside the Royal Palace. This rigid inflatable boat takes you around the archipelago and to some of the most famous sights along the way. ☎ 09-202260

Cultural Adventures

Kulturhuset, "the Culture House," is at Sergels Torg and is the most visited attraction in the city. It offers many exhibitions, both temporary and permanent. The Concert House is not far away, at Hötorget, a two-minute walk north.

According to a recent study, visiting museums is the second-most popular thing to do with tourists in Stockholm (number one is shopping). There are enough museums in Stockholm to keep you busy for a week or more. But, instead of running around trying to see as many as possible on your visit, focus on a few that are most worth experiencing. Some of the most popular and famous include the **National Museum**, the **Moderna Museum** and **Nordiska Museum**. Obviously, everyone's taste is different but I'd like to bring to your attention two museums you shouldn't miss. One is famous but hardly a tourist trap, the other is not even known by most locals, despite its central location. Remember that most museums in Stockholm are closed on Mondays, but open all other days of the week.

The Vasa Museum

Built in the early 17th century by order of the king Gustav II Adolf, the Vasa Ship was to become the pride and joy of the

Swedish navy. Sweden was a rising super-power in Europe and the grand ship would have been a great addition to the already powerful military. Unfortunately, it was not to be, as it sank just minutes after it left the harbor for its maiden voyage on August 10, 1628. Although it took 333 years to salvage the ship, it was in remarkably good condition and most of what you see today on the ship is original. The Vasa Museum is, and has been for many years, one of the most visited museums in Scandinavia. There are guided tours in English which you shouldn't miss if you want to get the full experience of your visit. There is also a 25-minute film that tells you more about the fascinating story behind the great ship. The museum is on Djurgården near Gröna Lund. Contact information, ☎ 08-51954800.

Stockholm's Stadsmuseum

Bby Slussen on Södermalm, city museum takes you through the history of Stockholm in a interesting way. It shows the history chronologically on three levels of the building. The museum is much bigger than it appears to be from the outside, and is fun and interesting to experience. There are numerous pictures, models, slide shows and videos that depict the city from the 13th century in Stockholm's infancy to the city we see today. Objects have been collected and added to the museum since the start in the 1930s. Admission is 60 kr/$6.50, free with the Stockholm Card. Contact information, ☎ 08-50831600.

Events

There are plenty of events and entertainment, especially in the summertime. **Kulturhuset**, the cultural center, by Sergels Torg is a good place to check out, as are the tourist offices of course. **Kungsträdgården**, the most central of all parks, is usually filled with events and activities such as concerts and other musical performances.

The **Globe Arena** is the biggest spherical building in the world with a capacity of 13,000. It is just south of the city center and is the main indoor arena for events in the city. It's

especially popular for sporting events such as ice-hockey, but many concerts are held here as well.

One of the more popular events in the last few years has been the annual Stockholm Jazz Festival.

Adventures

In the Air

❖ Hot Air Balloon

Stockholm is one of few capitals in the world, perhaps the only one, where ballooning is allowed right over the city center. The balloons in Stockholm are allowed to fly as low as 150 m (450 feet) above ground, which makes this a unique experience. A trip in a hot air balloon is an exciting adventure on its own, but the view over such a beautiful city as Stockholm makes it spectacular. The only downside is the price. Expect to pay 1,500-2,000 kr/$160-220 for a tour that lasts about two hours. Some companies can have special offers, so shop around before you make any decisions.

Since the wind dictates which direction the balloon flies, the starting point will not be decided until maybe a few hours before take-off. A popular and frequent starting place, however, is the open field at Gärdet in the northeast part of town.

> **Tip:** Temperatures are about the same in the air as on the ground and there is no wind chill factor since the balloon moves at the speed of the wind. There is no special dress code but a good rule of thumb is to dress as you would for a walk in the woods.

Licensed Companies

- **Scandinavian Balloons**, ☎ 08-55640465, www.balloons-sweden.se.
- **Ballongfirman City Ballong**, ☎ 08-345464, www.city-ballong.se.
- **Ballongflyg i Stockholm**, ☎ 08-920202.

On Foot

❖ Climbing

There are about 2,000 climbing trails in Stockholm and you don't have to travel far to find many of them. Södermalm, in downtown, has some exciting climbing to offer at two places. **Söder Mälarstrand** at the northwestern end has a wall 12 m (36 feet) high and **Danviks Tull** in the northeastern section of Södermalm has the 25 m (75-foot) **Kanalklippan**.

On Water

❖ Kayaking

No other city is better for a canoe or kayak excursion than Stockholm, with its narrow straits and channels meandering through all the islands. Staying within the city limits, for example around the island of Djurgården, is perfect for a one-day or half-day trip. Canoes can be rented at **Brunnsvikens Kanotcentral**, Hagvägen 5, Frescati, ☎ 08-155060, and **Kafé Kajak**, Smedsuddsvägen 23, ☎ 08-7380600. You can also venture a little outside the city, in Lake Mälaren, or out in the archipelago. Vaxholm, north of Stockholm, can be reached by car and is a good starting point for archipelago trips. Contact **Skärgårdens Kanotcenter**, Vaxholm, ☎ 08-54137790.

❖ Swimming

As I've mentioned before, the water is clean enough to swim in even in the city center. Here are some good places to try:

Kungsholmen has a couple of really good parks. One of them is **Rålambshovsparken**, which is in the southern corner adjacent to the water. The swimming area here, called **Smedsuddsbadet**, has a sandy beach right next to the lush park. A more secluded area is on the west side of the island where you'll find the barren **Fredhälls Klippbad**. Another popular place is just across from Kungsholmen. Just take Västerbron (the longest bridge in the city) onto the island of **Långholmen**. Långholmen used to be a prison

island but the old prison is today a museum and a hostel. The bathing area here is right next to the old prison.

Some good swimming spots in the Archipelago:

- **Nåttarö** – Has the best sandy beaches in the archipelago and they extend around the entire island.
- **Sandhamn** – Has long sandy beaches around the entire island but the best beach is by **Trouville**, one km south of the harbor.
- **Utö and Ålö** – Two neighboring islands connected by bridge, with nice sandy beaches as well as cliffs.

For more information about these islands and how to get there, see the *Archipelago*, page 186.

Places to Stay

Grand Hotel, Södra Blasieholmshamnen 8, ☎ 08-6793500, $$$$. This five-star hotel is probably the most famous one in Stockholm, ideally situated by Strömkajen, right across from the Royal Palace.

Hotel Victory, Lilla Nygatan 5, Gamla Stan, ☎ 08-50640000, $$$$. The biggest silver horde ever found in Sweden was discovered in this building in 1937, then a second one in 1984 when the hotel was established. It consisted of 18,000 silver coins, buried here sometime in the 18th century. This is a five-star hotel in the charming Gamla Stan (Old Town).

Nordic Sea Hotel, Vasaplan, ☎ 08-50563420, $$$$, www.nordicseahotel.com. The hotel has 367 hotel rooms divided into four categories which have everything you could ask for in comfort and quality. You'll also find the world's first permanent ice bar which is kept at -5°C (23°F) year-round.

Queen's Hotel, Drottninggatan 71A, ☎ 08-249460, $$$, www.queenshotel.se. Queens has a very central location on Drottninggatan, which is the busiest pedestrian shopping street in the city. There are 32 rooms with various sizes and prices. All are equipped with cable TV and Internet connection.

Vanadis Hotel, Sveavägen 142, ☎ 08-301211, $$-$$$. This hotel is reasonably priced and guests have access to Vanadisbadet, with its swimming pools and saunas.

Wasa Park Hotel, St. Eriksplan 1, ☎ 08-5454-5300, $$-$$$. The hotel is just a 10-minute walk from the central parts of downtown in the Vasastan district, which is generally a good place to find affordable hotels.

HOTEL PRICES SWEDEN	
For double room including taxes. For hostels with no double rooms, price is per bed in dormitory.	
$	Under 300 kr ($39)
$$	300-600 kr ($39-$78)
$$$	601-1,200 kr ($40-$156)
$$$$	Over 1,200 kr ($156+)

STF Hostel af Chapman, Flaggmansvägen 8, ☎ 08-4632266, $$. This unusual hostel is in a ship, which is moored by Skeppsholmen, not far from Grand Hotel.

STF Hostel Långholmen, Kronohäktet, ☎ 08-7208500, $$. Another interesting hostel, in an old prison on Långholmen, the island between Kungsholmen and Gamla Stan.

Places to Eat

Bistro Jarl, Birger Jarlsgatan 7, ☎ 08-6117630, $$$$. Expensive and stylish restaurant near Stureplan between the districts of Norrmalm and Östermalm.

Döden i Grytan, Norrtullsgatan 61, ☎ 08-325095, $$$-$$$$. Not cheap but you get a lot of food for your money. The name of the place literally translated means "death in the pot" and it's in the district of Vasastan.

Kung Karls Bakficka, Norrlandsgatan 28, ☎ 08-4635000, $$$. A modern place in the City Center where you can eat anything from typical Swedish cuisine to Mediterranean dishes.

Östgötakällaren, Östgötagatan 41, ☎ 08-6432240, $$-$$$. This cozy restaurant is on Södermalm, the island just south of Gamla Stan. Pleasant atmosphere with an open-air section in the summer.

Hermans, Fjällgatan 23, ☎ 08-6439480, $$. In the northeast part of Södermalm where you have a panoramic view of Gamla Stan and the City Center. Many come here

RESTAURANT PRICES SWEDEN	
For one main course & a beverage, including taxes.	
$	Less than 75 kr ($10)
$$	75-150 kr ($10-$20)
$$$	151-200 kr ($21-$25)
$$$$	Over 200 kr ($25+)

for the vegetarian dishes but the menu is full of options. Reasonably priced.

Nightlife

In the early 18th century, Gamla Stan was a buzzing place at night with about 800 pubs. In such a small area, that's practically one on every street corner and many of them were crowded even during the week. These days, there are three main areas attracting people at night – the **City Center**, Stureplan and Södermalm. Most bars stay open until 1 am, some close at 3 am, and many of the nightclubs around Stureplan stay open until 5 am.

Stureplan, in the border zone between the City Center and Östermalm, is where all the ritzy, trendy bars and clubs are. Expect long lines on weekends and cover charges once they let you in. **Södermalm** is for those seeking a more laid-back atmosphere. **Götgatan**, on Södermalm, which stretches all the way across the island from Slussen to Skanstull, is the best bar street in Stockholm. **Medborgarplatsen**, along this street, is buzzing in the summer and filled with open-air bars in the middle of the square.

Excursions from the City

The Archipelago

The archipelago is popular in the summer with locals and visitors alike. About 6,000 people live on the islands year-round and over 100,000 in the summer but, with 24,000 islands, there is plenty of room for tourists too. The most important factor to consider when choosing which islands to visit is how much time you want to spend. Do you want to spend a few hours, a whole day, or several days? You don't even have to take a boat to get to some of the islands. **Ingarö**, east of the city near Gustavsberg, has a land connection and you can get there by bus, for example from Slussen. **Björnöreservatet** here, on Ingarö, is great for hiking and has good beaches as well. **Fjäderholmarna** is a group of four little islands just 25 minutes by boat from the city center. For a one-day excursion, or even just a few hours, this is a good option.

Grinda is probably the most popular island for daily excursions and is always packed with tourists in the summer. Avoid it. Instead, take the time to go to one of the islands in the outer archipelago such as **Landsort** or **Sandhamn** (Sandön). The three-hour boat ride is as much of an experience as the actual islands, which makes even a day-trip to the outer archipelago worth your time. Landsort and Sandhamn are about as far east as you can go in the Baltic Sea without leaving the archipelago. The islands here have both sandy beaches and barren landscapes. The lighthouse on Landsort was the first in Sweden and dates back to 1651. Sandhamn is one of the most famous of all the islands around Stockholm and the start of many famous regattas, such as Gotland Runt.

There are some islands in the southern archipelago which are worth visiting but getting there requires a bit more time and effort. **Nynäshamn**, one hour south of Stockholm, is a good starting point for this region and can be reached by train from the Central Station.

❖ Getting Around in the Archipelago

Waxholmsbolaget, ☎ 08-6795830, www.waxholmsbolaget.se. This company's boats depart from Strömkajen outside Grand Hotel to various islands in the archipelago, including Vaxholm, Grinda, Möja, Sandhamn and Finnhamn. You can also travel in style in one of the company's steamships and enjoy a meal onboard. These trips need to be booked in advance. Waxholmsbolaget also has boats to Djurgården departing from Slussen.

Strömma Kanalbolaget, ☎ 08-58714000, www.strommakanlbolaget.com, has several routes both in the archipelago and into Lake Mälaren. Guided boat tours depart from Nybroplan, where you can also take the ferry to Fjäderholmarna. Strömma also has some excursions leaving from outside the City Hall to places like Drottningholm and Birka.

Cinderellabåtarna, ☎ 08-58714050, www.cinderellabatarna.com. Depart from Strandvägen by Nybroviken, to Möja, Finnhamn and Sandhamn.

DISCOUNT CARD

If you plan to spend several days on the islands in the archipelago, you should consider the discount card, **Båtluffarkortet**. This can be purchased at Strömkajen and the Kulturhuset building where the tourist office is. For 490 kr/$52 you can travel as much as you want on the Waxholmsbolaget boats for 16 days.

Birka

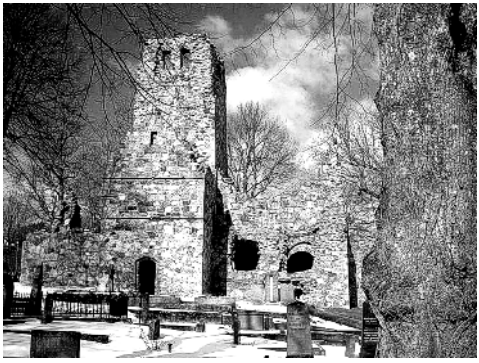
Birka is the famous old Viking village on the island of Björkö in Lake Mälaren west of Stockholm. It is probably the best-preserved village from the Viking Age – which has made Birka a World Heritage site. Nearly 300 grave areas have been found on the island. The Vikings were often buried with their personal belongings since they wanted to bring them into the afterlife.

Birka was founded in the early Viking Age more than 1,200 years ago, which makes it the first city in Sweden that we know of. Because of the land rise, Birka was much closer to the sea in those days and was a flourishing port for trading. For unknown reasons, Birka was abandoned some time in the mid-10th century. It is possible that the land rise, in combination with bigger ships, had made it too difficult for them to get to and from the port. Where did they all go? Probably to Sigtuna, which was founded around that time and is the oldest city in Sweden that still exists today. It is also much worth a visit. (Read more about Sigtuna below.)

Birka is the perfect excursion if you want to combine culture with a scenic boat ride on beautiful Lake Mälaren. Although the original village from the Viking Age is long gone, the rebuilt version and the museum make for an interesting journey back in time. Prices are 150-250 kr/$16-27, which includes guided tours and entrance to the museum on the island. **Strömma Kanalbolaget**, ☎ 08-58714000, www.strommakanalbolaget.com, has tours departing from Stadshusbron just outside the City Hall. **Mälarö**

Skärgårdstrafik, ☎ 08-7111457, www.ms-movitz.com, runs tours departing from Rastaholm. The boat trip to the island takes about 30 minutes.

Sigtuna



Sigtuna is just south of Arlanda International Airport, 30 minutes north of Stockholm. By car, take the exit for Märsta from the E4 highway and follow signs for Sigtuna. There are frequent bus transfers between Arlanda and Sigtuna. From Stockholm, you can take the train to Märsta and then take the bus from there to Sigtuna.

Some say that Sigtuna is the oldest city in Sweden. That is not quite true, but it is the oldest existing city and was founded by King Erik Segersäll in 980. The king really picked the perfect spot, beautifully situated on the water, which was essential in those days when boats were the fastest form of transportation. Even though the buildings are not as old as the city, most wooden houses are from the 18th and 19th centuries and the cobblestoned main street is in virtually the same place as it was over 1,000 years ago. Sigtuna resembles more an open-air museum than a city, so much so that a visitor once asked what time the city closes. Although it doesn't close for the winter, Sigtuna is definitely best to visit in the summer. Guided tours are also offered in the summer at the tourist office on the main street, ☎ 08-59480650. Something that shouldn't be missed when in Sigtuna, apart from looking around in the city, is taking a walk down by the lake and perhaps enjoying a waffle at **Café Våfflan** by the harbor. The café also offers bikes, boats and canoes for rent.

❖ Skokloster Castle

While you're in the Sigtuna area, don't forget to visit Skokloster, one of the premier Baroque castles in Europe. This castle was built during the era of greatness in Sweden and is well preserved, mainly because it has hardly been lived

in at all. Skokloster is less than 30 minutes from Sigtuna. If you are coming directly from Stockholm, it's closer to take E18 toward Enköping and take the exit for Bro after about 70 km (48 miles).

Drottningholm Palace

Although it's the home of the royal family, you can still visit certain sections of the Palace and the surrounding gardens. Drottningholm was designed in the late 17th century by Tessin Sr and Jr, the famous architect family who also built the Royal Palace in Gamla Stan. It was built for Queen Eleonora, the widow of King Karl X. Feel free to walk around in the building on your own, but the guided tours are included in the entrance fee and there are several tours in English every day in the summer.

Other sites nearby that you shouldn't miss while you are in the area are the **Drottningholm Slottsteater** (the Castle Theater) and the **Kina Slott**. The theater is the oldest one in the world still in use and was untouched between 1792, when Gustav III died, and 1922. The Kina Slott was built as a birthday gift to Queen Lovisa Ulrika in 1753 and is at the far end of the garden. Both attractions also offer guided tours and charge separate admissions from the palace. A good idea if you plan to visit all is to buy the Stockholm Card before you go. (See page 172 for information about purchasing the card.)

❖ Getting Here

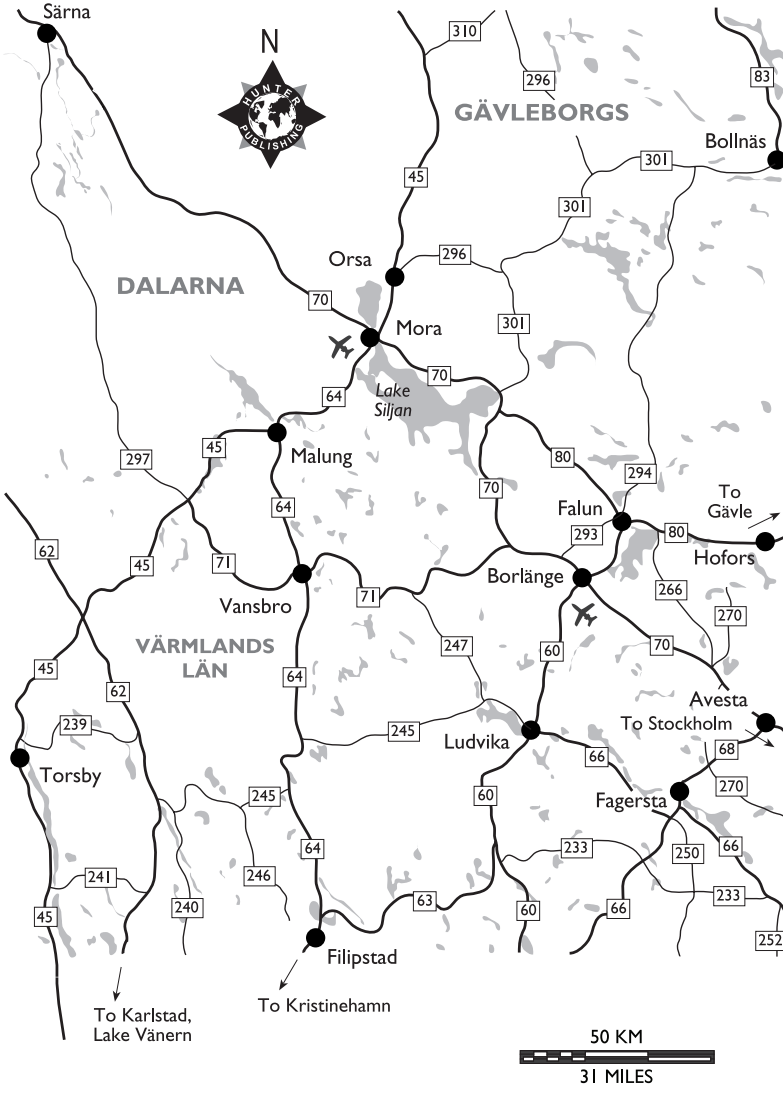
There are boats departing from the pier outside the Stockholm City Hall daily in the summer. Drottningholm is reasonably close to the city, though a little too far to walk. If you have a bike and the weather is nice enough, it will take you about 30 minutes. You can also take the subway to Brommaplan and from there take the bus.

■ Dalarna

Introduction

Dalarna, sometimes called Dalecarlia in English, is Sweden in a nutshell. If I had to pick just one province to represent the whole country, it would have to be this one. There are lakes,

Dalarna



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mountains, open fields and forests. It's centrally located in Sweden and has the history and traditions. One of the few things it lacks is a coastline. Midsummer, the popular Swedish holiday, is celebrated much more in Dalarna than in the rest of Sweden and the famous maypoles are seen all over the province even several weeks after Midsummer weekend.

It was in Dalarna that King Gustav Vasa made his memorable escape from the Danes on a pair of skis in the 16th century. It is in his memory that Vasaloppet (the Vasa Race), the biggest cross-country ski race in the world, is held every year the first weekend in March. But perhaps most famous of all in Dalarna is a little wooden horse, as much of a symbol for the country of Sweden as the blue and yellow flag or the royal family (see *The Dala Horse*, below, page 198).

Getting Here & Getting Around

By Plane

The main airport in Dalarna is **Dala Airport** in Borlänge, ☎ 0243-64500, with connections to both Stockholm and Gothenburg. There is also an airport in **Mora** with connections to Stockholm. Mora is the best airport to fly into if your final destination is the mountain region. Contact Skyways airline at ☎ 0771-959500, www.skyways.se.

By Bus & Train

You can take a train from Stockholm to Borlänge and from there continue to Mora via Leksand and Rättvik. From these cities, you can get to other places in the province on buses with **Dalatrafik**, ☎ 020-232425. To get to the mountain region of Dalarna, the nearest train stations are Mora and Malung. From both places it will then take you about one hour by bus.

Falun

Falun is a name that Swedish people associate with three things: the copper mine, red paint and a special type of sausage known as Falukorv. Thanks to the mine, Falun became the second-biggest city in Sweden, with 6,000 inhabitants when it was officially declared a city in 1641. Today, Falun is just an average city in size, with about 55,000 people, but,

thanks to the mine and the well preserved wooden houses in the old parts of town, it is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, making it anything but average.

- **Falun Tourist Office**, Trotzgatan 10-12, ☎ 023-83314.

The Copper Mine

Mining has been done in Falun for over 1,000 years. The glory days were in the 17th century when the mine attracted people from all over the country and the mine was responsible for 75% of all copper exported in the world. It was by far the biggest industry in Sweden. The financial benefits were a big part of what enabled Sweden to grow into a powerful country with a strong military in the 16th and 17th centuries. In 1687, the mine collapsed and left a huge hole in the ground, which became known as "Stora Stöten." Luckily, it happened on Midsummer's Day when nobody was working there. (Midsummer is a holiday celebrated more in Dalarna than in other parts of Sweden, but this incident has no relation to that). The collapse did not stop the mining, however, which went on for another 300 years until 1992 when all production of copper in the mine was shut down. Today, the only thing still produced here is red paint.

The Red Paint

When you drive around the Swedish countryside, especially in Dalarna, you can't help noticing how many houses are painted red with white corners. This shade of red became known as "Falu Rödfärg" and is actually a by-product of the mine. The paint is especially popular for houses not only in Dalarna but in many other parts of the country. Initially, only the wealthy could afford the red paint and it wasn't until the 18th century that mass production started.

The Falukorv

In order to bring copper and workers up from the mine before elevators were around, the skin of oxen was used to create ropes. Since they didn't want to waste all the meat from these oxen, they started making sausages, which were called Falukorv. Falukorv became popular and even today are one of the most popular foods sold in Swedish stores.

The Petrified Miner

In 1677, 10 years before the big mine collapse, a worker named Mats Israelsson disappeared somewhere in the mine and wasn't found until over 40 years later. He was in remarkably good shape for a dead guy. His body had been preserved by the vitriol-rich water and his old girlfriend could easily identify him since his physical appearance hadn't changed much in all those years. After this, Fat-Mats, as he was known, was given a proper burial and became famous, even internationally, as "the petrified miner."

Did You Know? The first time the word tourist was used in Sweden was on a painting from 1824 portraying a visitor in the mine. Consequently, you could say that the copper mine in Falun was the first tourist attraction in Sweden.

Sightseeing in Falun

Falun is best explored on foot and the city is probably the prettiest in Dalarna, at least much nicer looking than its neighbor Borlänge. The old sections, with their well-preserved wooden houses from the 17th century, are a must-see. **Elsborg**, **Gamla Herrgården** and **Östanfors** are three districts where mine workers lived and the houses remain intact, having escaped the fire that destroyed most of Falun in 1761. The **Great Kopparberg Church** from the 14th century, at right, is the oldest building in town and well worth a visit. Apart from the old sections, you will see that Falun is also a modern city with plenty of shops, hotels and restaurants to accommodate its many visitors.

Cultural Adventures

❖ Visiting the Mine & the Museum

An elevator will take you down 55 m (170 feet) below ground, where the guide will lead you through 1,000 years of history.

The mine opened to visitors in 1969 and over one million people have been here since then. Walking through the passages and galleries, you'll get a good sense of the tough working conditions the miners had to put up with every day. The whole mine is like a giant labyrinth with about 30 km (18 miles) of passages and you'll get to experience some of those when the guide walks you along the visitors' trail. One of the most astounding sights on the tour is the Creutz Schakt, a mine pit over 200 m (600 feet) deep. Dividing this pit is a wall, supposedly the tallest wooden structure in the world.

You should also try to combine your visit to the mine with a look inside the museum. The **Mine Museum** is in one of the houses near the mine and is the oldest museum of technology in Sweden. Although the guided tour of the mine is like visiting a museum in itself, the museum is fascinating and shouldn't be missed.

The mine and the museum are in the western section of town at the end of Gruvgatan, ☎ 023-711475. Guided tours are available in English but it's a good idea to call first and check the times.

Adventures

❖ On Water

Falun is surrounded by lakes and renting a boat, canoe or kayak is probably the best way to experience this region. **Lake Runn**, just south of the city, is the biggest lake around Falun and is well-suited for water activities, with plenty of little bays and islands. They say Lake Runn has as many islands as there are days in the year, which may be a slight exaggeration. You'll find that a canoe excursion on the lake is a pleasant experience, just as long as your trip does not coincide with one of the boat races that take place here quite frequently. Check with the tourist office for details. You can also take the guided sightseeing tour with **M/S *Slussbruden***, departing from Falun.

❖ Boat Rental Services

- **Runns Sjöbod**, ☎ 073-9907422.
- **Bjursås Stugby and Camping**, Bjursås ☎ 023-774177, in a lake-rich area 20 minutes north of Falun toward Rättvik.
- **Gullnäsgården**, Stennäset ☎ 023-10406.

Places to Stay

Scandic Hotel Lugnet, Svärdsjögatan 51, Falun ☎ 023-669220, $$$$. good but expensive hotel in Lugnet, a sports and recreational area just two km (1.2 miles) from downtown Falun.

Hotel Falun, Trotzgatan 16, Falun ☎ 023-29180, www.hotelfalun.nu, $$-$$$. This family-run hotel is next to the tourist office in downtown Falun. It's small but very modern and offers good value with its comfort and central location.

Lugnets Camping and Stugby, Lugnetvägen 5, Falun ☎ 023-83563, $. This campsite has cabins to rent and is just two km from downtown Falun in a tranquil environment with natural surroundings.

Falu Fängelse Hostel, Villavägen 17, Falun ☎ 023-795575, $, www.falufangelse.se. Stay at the old prison, which has been turned into a hostel. The rooms are the original prison cells that have been refurbished.

Places to Eat

Mariannes Pub & Restaurang, Stigaregatan 6, Falun ☎ 023-20101, $$. Bar, restaurant and café in downtown Falun with an open-air serving area in the summer.

Bryggcaféet, Fisktorget, Falun ☎ 023-23330, $$. Nice café serving light meals. Has the best location in town right along the river with an open-air serving area.

Köpmanskrogen, Slaggatan 16, Falun ☎ 023-12118, $.

The Siljan Area

Lake Siljan, created by a meteor 360 million years ago, is the biggest lake in Dalarna, the seventh-biggest in Sweden, and in the heart of Dalarna, with cities like Mora, Orsa, Rättvik and Leksand surrounding it. Nobody knows for sure the origin of the name Siljan. Some say it comes from an ancient word, meaning calm water, others claim that it means "the swallower," because of its depth.

Mora

Mora is the biggest city on Lake Siljan, with a population of about 20,000. Unlike most Swedish small towns, Mora is well-known throughout the country. The main reason is the ski race, **Vasaloppet**, which has its finish right in the city center. Next to the finish line, there is a statue of the former king who gave the race its name (read more about Vasaloppet under *Events*, page 199). The creator of the statue was Anders Zorn, one of the most famous Swedish artists, who was born here in Mora. Another thing that has put the city on the map is the *Mora Knife*, found in toolboxes in just about every household in the country. **Mora Tourist Office**, the Railway Station, Mora, ☎ 0250-592020.

Rättvik

This sleepy little village is known as the cultural center of Siljan but, frankly, there is not much to see or do here. If the weather is nice, walk out on the wooden pier, **Långbryggan**, probably the longest of its kind in the world, built in 1895 to allow steamships to approach. The water is amazingly shallow outside Rättvik; even after walking the 628 m (700 yards) to the end of the pier, you can still see the sandy bottom. Looking back at Rättvik from the pier, you will have a great view of the village and the **ski slope** to the right, where you can try the toboggan track in the summer! The beautiful **Rättvik Church** can be seen on your left, surrounded by trees on a little peninsula across the bay. **Rättvik Tourist Office**, the Railway Station, Rättvik, ☎ 0248-797210.

Leksand

Leksand's claim to fame is crisp bread and ice-hockey. This particular kind of bread, also produced in other places, is typical for Sweden. The local ice-hockey team is one of the most successful of all time in the Swedish league, quite remarkable considering Leksand has a population of only a few thousand. If you happen to visit Leksand during the summer, you can see the tallest **maypole** in the country. The **church**, built in the 13th century, and right on the lake, is worth a visit any time of year. Other than that, it's the natural surroundings of the little town that are worth your time, not the village itself.

Leksand Tourist Office, Norsgatan 40, Leksand, ☎ 0247-796130.

> **Tip:** If driving between Rättvik and Leksand, avoid taking the main road. Instead, follow the signs to Tällberg, which will take you closer to the lake and provide much nicer scenery. Almost all the houses in Tällberg are made of wood and painted in the classic Falu-red color with white corners, characteristic of old houses in Dalarna. Read more about Tällberg under *Places to Stay*, page 204.

THE DALA HORSE

The Dala Horse is a symbol, not only for the province of Dalarna, but for the entire country of Sweden. It all started over 400 years ago when the forestry business forced employees to live away from their families for weeks at a time while working in the woods. To pass time, the men started carving little wooden horses, partly because they were bored but also to bring home as gifts for their kids. Using the horse as a model for these creations was logical. In those days, horses were vital in their everyday lives and considered "Man's best friend." The little horse has now spread all over the world and has long been a popular gift. The Dala Horse comes in all colors and sizes, but the traditional one is red with flowers painted on its back. The tallest Dala Horse in the world is 13 m (40 feet) high and located in Avesta in eastern Dalarna.

Sightseeing

❖ Steamships on Siljan

Boats on Siljan used to be a much more frequent sight. Before the railroad was introduced at the end of the 19th century, iron and coal were transported in great quantities on these ships. People

also found it much quicker and more convenient to take a boat across, rather than a horse and carriage. Steamships started operating on the lake around 1840 and were common well into the 1950s, even when the railroad had been operating for a while. Today, there are only two ships remaining from those days, **S/S *Engelbrekt*** and **M/S *Gustaf Wasa***, both built in the 19th century. They take you on scenic cruises of Lake Siljan. Get on board at Leksand, Rättvik or Mora to see some great views from the lake.

Events

❖ Vasaloppet

Vasaloppet is much more than just a regular ski race. First of all, it's the biggest ski race in the world in terms of the number of participants. But the greatness of this race is in its history and traditions. The first official race was in 1922 and had 139 participants. Today, the number has increased to over 15,000 and the start has been moved from Sälen to nearby Transtrand.

To compete in Vasaloppet, it's recommended that you fill out an application as soon as you can since spots are filled quickly. This can be done at **www.vasaloppet.se**. If you are too late with your application, try registering for "öppet spår," which is held one week prior to the main event. It covers the same distance on the same track and you can still compare your time with the best skiers in the world competing in the main event. Keep in mind before you enter, that the race is long, 90 km (54 miles), so you need to be in good physical shape just to finish. The winning time in Vasaloppet is usually around four hours. A recreational skier in good physical condition should aim for a time of six to seven hours. The official drink of Vasaloppet is blueberry soup, provided by the organizers throughout the race.

THE HISTORY OF VASALOPPET

Five centuries ago, a young man named Gustav Eriksson Vasa raced the same distance as they do today, only the opposite direction, while fleeing from Danish soldiers. At the time, Sweden was under Danish rule and the king was Kristian II. The king was feared by the people of Sweden and Vasa was

one of the few that dared to challenge him. Vasa's attempts were brave but Kristian, who was known as "the Tyrant" in Sweden, threw him in jail. When Vasa managed to escape, he decided to head north and ended up in Dalarna where he knew people were strong opponents of the Danish regime and likely to support an uprising.

To Vasa's surprise and disappointment, he did not get the immediate response he asked for when speaking to a crowd in Mora. The men were favorably impressed, but wanted to get approval from other villages nearby before making a decision.

Vasa, with his enemies in close pursuit, couldn't afford to wait and took off toward the Norwegian border on skis. But it didn't take the men in Mora long to make up their minds and decide in Vasa's favor. They sent their fastest skiers out to find him and eventually caught up with Vasa in Sälen. When they made it back to Mora, they mobilized their troops and headed for Stockholm, where Gustav Vasa was crowned king of Sweden in 1523 and Sweden finally became independent.

❖ Music by the Lake

Many great composers have spent time around the idyllic Lake Siljan, which has inspired some of their best music. In early July every year, the three towns of Leksand, Rättvik and Mora are filled with musical performances every day for about eight days. Lake Siljan is a popular area for visitors year-round, but many come specifically for this week in July. It has become one of the main musical events in Sweden and after 35 years it's still growing in popularity.

Cultural Adventures

❖ Dalhalla

What can you do with a hole in the ground that used to be a limestone quarry 1,200 feet long, 525 feet wide and 180 feet deep? A former opera singer named Margareta Dellefors had an idea that acoustics here could provide the perfect setting

for an open-air concert hall. She was right. The acoustics in Dalhalla are so good that many performances have been done without microphones or amplifiers. Just north of Rättvik, this hole, created by a meteor 360 million years ago, is now one of the most fascinating concert halls you will ever find. Dalhalla is best experienced at a concert but it's also worth taking a guided tour, offered daily in the summer between 10 am and 4 pm. Adults pay 45 kr/$5.

Tip: If you plan to go to Dalhalla for a concert during Music at Siljan, the popular music week, try to get there as early as possible, at least one hour before it starts. Parking is not a problem, there are plenty of spaces but traffic will get pretty bad on the narrow winding road towards Dalhalla. Also remember to bring some warm clothes as temperatures drop quickly once the sun sets.

Dalhalla is a 10-minute drive from Rättvik. As you exit the city heading north on Road 70 toward Mora, turn right where it says Kullsberg/Nittjö. Then follow the signs to Dalhalla. Buses leave from the Rättvik Train Station on concert days.

Visiting the Dala Horse Factory

A visit to the village of Nusnäs, southeast of Mora, to watch the production of Dala Horses is a unique experience. This is the only place where they are made and, though all are carved and painted by hand, over 400,000 horses are produced every year, with 20% of those exported. The best time to visit is on a weekday when you can watch the workers in action. Nusnäs is a short drive south of

Mora along the lake and, if you don't have a car, buses from downtown Mora depart frequently. The two companies in Nusnäs making Dala horses are **Nils Olsson Hemslöjd**, Edåkersvägen 17, 79277 Nusnäs, ☎ 0250-37200, www.nohemslojd.se, and **Grannas A. Olsson**, Edåkersvägen 24, 79277 Nusnäs, ☎ 0252-37250, www.grannas.com.

Tip: When buying a Dala Horse, choose carefully. Since they are all carved and painted by hand, no two horses look exactly alike.

❖ The Zorn Museum

One of the most famous Swedish artists, Anders Zorn, was born in Mora in 1860. He spent much time abroad but always liked to return to his native Dalarna where he found many of his favorite subjects for paintings. Some of the best-known paintings can be seen in the museum here in Mora. He clearly liked painting portraits of women such as his wife Emma, but also self-portraits and portraits of ordinary people in his native Dalarna with the beautiful landscape in the background. One of the paintings in the museum is of a young woman whose eyes follow you around wherever you walk in the room – a little bit creepy.

Helga, Anders Zorn

Stuio Idyll, Anders Zorn

Zorn became, unlike many other famous painters of the past, rich and famous in his own lifetime. He would charge 50,000 kr/$5,300 for painting a portrait in Sweden, an extraordinary amount in those days. When he was abroad, he would charge even more. Some of the famous people he portrayed in his paintings include US presidents Grover Cleveland, William Taft and Theodore Roosevelt – painted during his numerous trips to America.

The Zorn Museum is on Dalagatan 36 in downtown Mora. Just across from it is **Zorngården**, the former home of Anders Zorn and his wife Emma. Zorngården is also open to the public, but only through guided tours. Both attractions are open Monday-Sunday, year-round. Admission is 40 kr/$4.30 per adult for the museum and 50 kr for Zorngården.

Adventures

❖ On Water

Siljan Aktiv, ☎ 070-5768863 has an office at Saxviken in downtown Mora where you can **rent kayaks** to paddle on Lake Siljan or on the river Dalälven. Cost is 300-400 kr/$32-38 per day. Other places to rent include:

- **Mora Parkens Hotel**, Parkvägen 1, Mora ☎ 0250-27600, www.moraparken.se.
- **Rättviksparken**, Enåbadsvägen, Rättvik ☎ 0248-56100.
- Hostels and tourist offices sometimes offer this service as well.

❖ On Foot

Sollerön is known as "the island of the sun" and is 14 km (8.4 miles) south of Mora. From the Hembygdsgård building a trail of 2½ km (1½ miles) takes you through the biggest Viking grave in Dalarna, **Gravfältsleden**, among other interesting sights.

If you are visiting Dalarna in the summer, a hiking tour on the trail between Sälen and Mora, Vasaloppsleden, normally associated with the ski race, can be just as enjoyable on foot. The trail stretches about 90 km (54 miles) and is practically identical to the one used for the ski race in March. There are several cabins along the way used for accommodation. To read more about the story behind the Vasaloppet Race, see *Events*, page 199.

❖ On Wheels

Siljanleden, a biking trail around the biggest lake in Dalarna, is 310 km (186 miles) long. Good places to start and finish are Leksand, Mora and Rättvik. To bike the entire trail, you should allow at least three days, but there are plenty of accommodations along the way. You can also take a shortcut by getting on the boat M/S *Gustaf Wasa* from Rättvik to Mora or vice versa. Just take your bike along on the boat, rest your legs, and then

start pedaling again at the next stop. Most parts of this trail are smaller paved roads but there are some sections with car traffic as well. The least traffic is on the stretch between Rättvik and Mora, but the best part is between Leksand and Rättvik where you pass through picturesque little villages like Tällberg and Hjortnäs. The western side of the lake between Mora and Leksand is also nice, especially Sollerön and the section between Siljansnäs and Leksand.

There are lots of places to **rent bikes** in the Siljan area. Check with tourist offices for listings. If you are staying at a hostel or campsite, you should check with them first. Many of them rent out bikes themselves and, if not, they most likely know who does.

- **Sörlins Sport**, Storgatan 14, Rättvik, ☎ 0248-13483.
- **STF Hostel** in Leksand, Parkgården Källberget, Leksand, ☎ 0247-15250 or 070-5600600, www.vandrarhemleksand.nu.

Places to Stay

Tällberg is a small village between Rättvik and Leksand with some of the best views of beautiful Lake Siljan in the area. This charming and peaceful little place is perfect for spending a day, or a night for that matter. There are eight hotels in Tällberg. Does it sound like too many for a small village? In fact, you'll never be able to tell since they all look like regular houses and not hotels.

Klockargården, Siljansvägen 6, Tällberg, ☎ 0247-50260, www.klockargarden.com, $$$. A well-known hotel in Tällberg but perhaps even more worth your attention for its restaurant.

Hotel and Restaurant Moskogen, Insjövägen 50, Leksand, ☎ 0247-14600, www.moskogen.com, $$$. Located at the southern end of town. Guests also have access to an outdoor pool and a Jacuzzi.

Mora Park Hotel, Parkvägen 1, Mora, ☎ 0250-27600, www.moraparken.se, $$$. Beautiful location in a tranquil environment close to Lake Siljan and the Dalälven River.

Tällbergsgården Hotell & Pensionat, Holgattu 1, Tällberg, ☎ 0247-50850, www.tallbergsgarden.se, $$. This is one of the oldest hotels in Tällberg, with a lot of charm and a great atmosphere.

Hotel Leksand, Leksandsvägen 7, ☎ 0247-14570, $$. In downtown Leksand by the square.
STF Hostel in Leksand, Parkgården Källberget, Leksand, ☎ 0247-15250 or 070-5600600, www.vandrarhemleksand.nu, $.

Places to Eat

Målkull Ann's, Vasagatan 19, Mora, ☎ 0250-38190, $$. Nice and cozy old-fashioned restaurant and café with a big open-air café in the summer. Next to the Vasaloppet Race finish line.
Clara's Restaurant, Vasagatan 38, Mora ☎ 0250-15898, $$. Next to the Zorn Museum, serving good meals at reasonable prices.
Vidablick Café and Restaurant, ☎ 0248-30250, $$. This café is located at the lookout tower in Rättvik where you can combine a good meal with a great view. There is also **Hotel Vidablick/Hantverksbyn**, $$$, with great views over lake Siljan as well.
Åsengården, Sollerö, ☎ 0250-21070. On the island of Sollerön with a spectacular view of Lake Siljan. Close to hiking and biking trails. Also has fairly cheap accommodation in cabins with an outdoor pool.
Siljans Konditori, Sparbanksgatan 5, Leksand, ☎ 0247-15070, $. Classic café in downtown Leksand serving fresh bread, sandwiches and other food from their own bakery.

The North

The region known as Norrland constitutes half of Sweden's area but only contains about 10% of the total population. Of those, the vast majority, and nearly all cities, are in the coastal provinces. **Umeå**, in Västerbotten along the coast, is the biggest city in Norrland. You'll notice when traveling in Norrland that the distances between cities are much farther than in the south but most of the sights and attractions are not found in the urbanized areas. What makes Norrland worthwhile is the peaceful environment with its lakes, forests and mountains.

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■ Jämtland-Harjedalen

Introduction

Jämtland and Härjedalen are two separate provinces but are often mentioned together as they constitute the county of Jämtland. (Throughout this chapter the name Jämtland will always refer to the province and never the county in order to avoid confusion and to distinguish it from Härjedalen.)

Today, Jämtland is mostly famous for its winter activities and Åre is arguably the best place for skiing north of the Alps. Even the summer is a good time to visit as people come for the tranquility and open spaces. Hiking, mountain biking, canoeing, whitewater rafting, climbing and fishing are some of the most popular summer activities. **Östersund** is the only city in the province and has a population of 60,000.

Härjedalen also has popular skiing resorts and is the only province in Sweden without a city. **Sveg** is the biggest community, with just 3,500 people. The closest city is actually **Røros** in Norway.

Brief History

The oldest evidence of settlement in this area dates back almost 10,000 years. Hunters and fishermen settled here around lakes and rivers after the latest Ice Age and many rock carvings can be seen today that tell stories of their everyday lives. Agriculture would become important but not until 200 or 300 AD, when people started migrating from nearby Norway. Jämtland was for many years considered an independent republic ruled by its own farmers with its own laws.

The region of Jämtland-Härjedalen has always had an exposed location as a border region between Norway and Sweden and the provinces officially belonged to Norway/Denmark between 1178 and 1645. The Jämtland farmers were stubborn people and not particularly loyal to either country at that time.

Although the peace treaty of Brömsebro in 1645 declared Jämtland a part of Sweden, it wasn't until 1699 that King Karl XII granted the people citizenship, making Jämtland the

last province to officially become Swedish. One of the main reasons why Sweden could gain control over the farmers of the province was that the king offered ownership of their farms back, which the Danish king had taken away from them. From this point on, Jämtland was fairly loyal to the Swedish government and even supported their new country in a famous battle in 1718 where King Karl XII fell.

When Norway and Sweden formed a union in 1814, Jämtland became a center for commerce. Population increased and the economy dramatically improved. The introduction of railroads in the late 19th century made things even more promising, but in 1905, the union dissolved and Jämtland went from a prosperous center of commerce to merely a producer of raw material. Starting in the 1950s, many of the young people of Jämtland started to move south, a trend still evident today.

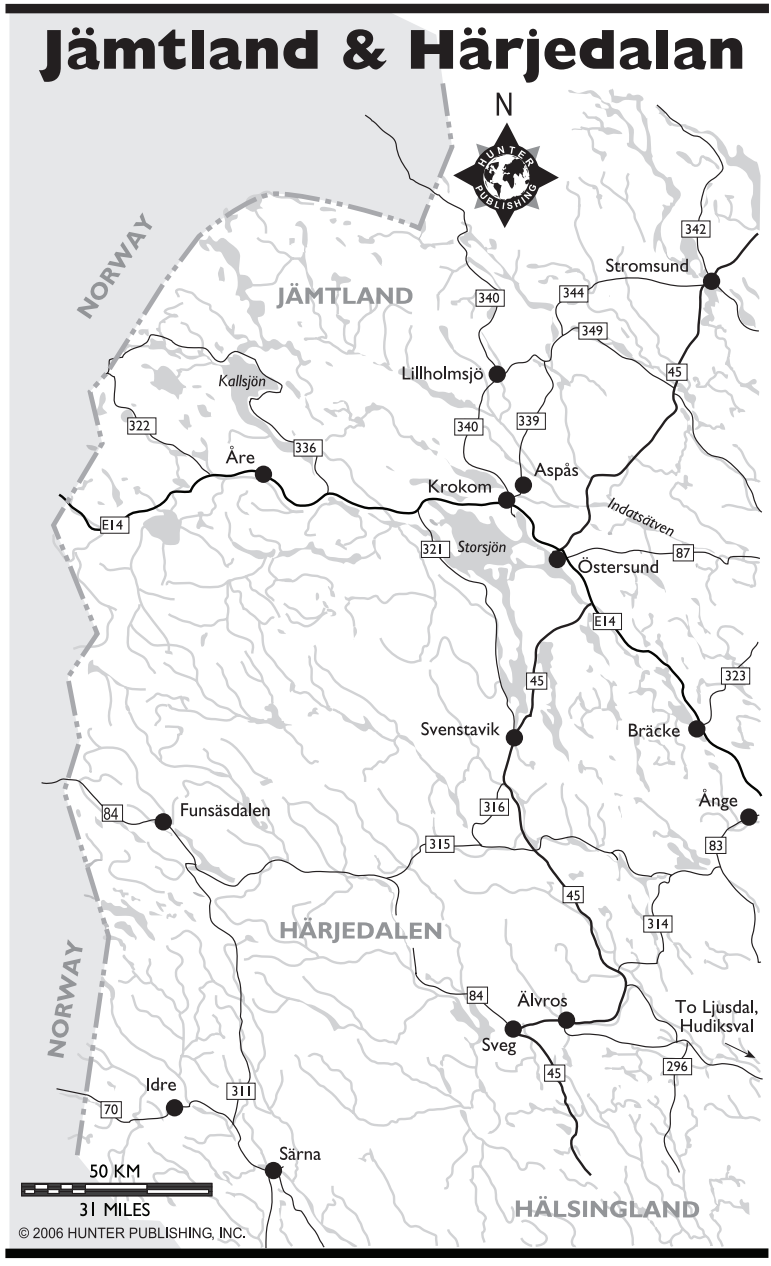
Getting Here & Getting Around

By Plane

The fastest way of getting to Jämtland/Härjedalen from remote cities is, of course, by plane. The **Östersund-Frösö Airport** has daily connections to Stockholm/Arlanda with **SAS** and the flight takes 50 minutes. Buses and taxis take you to the Östersund city center in about 10 minutes. **Sveg** in Härjedalen also has an airport with connections to Stockholm through **European Executive Express**, ☎ 0680-10095, www.european.se.

By Train

There are trains going in all directions. **Inlandsbanan** takes you through both provinces going south/north and is a popular way of traveling. It's only available from June to August and not for those who wish to get here and away quickly, but it's great for sightseeing. For quicker connections by train, Östersund has easy access from most places in Sweden and Trondheim in Norway. Trondheim is just over four hours away. **Nabotåget** (www.nabotaget.nu) train lines offer good rates. The train stops at Åre, the popular ski resort between Östersund and Trondheim. Sundsvall is only about two hours away and you can reach Stockholm with direct trains in about six hours.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For more information, time tables and rates, call **SJ**, the Swedish national train company, ☎ 0771-757575 or visit www.resplus.se, where you can find all the routes and prices available for buses and trains in Sweden.

By Bus

There is a well developed network for traveling by bus in the area. Wherever you can't get by train, you normally can by bus. The bus service, **Härjedalingen's**, takes you from Stockholm to Funäsdalen and stops at Ljusdal. For times and prices when traveling in Jämtland, call the **Jämtland County bus service**, ☎ 063-168200; for Härjedalen, call the **Härjedalingen** bus service, ☎ 0680-60580.

By Car

If getting here by car, the trip takes about seven hours from Stockholm to Östersund and five-six hours to Härjedalen. From southern Sweden, take Road 45 through Dalarna. While in Jämtland, traveling by car is the best way to get around. The trip from Östersund to Åre takes just over one hour.

Car Rental Companies in Östersund (also with offices at the airport):

- **Europcar**, ☎ 063-574750
- **Hertz**, ☎ 063-575030
- **Sixt**, ☎ 063-104410
- **Avis**, ☎ 063-575030
- **Taxi Östersund**, ☎ 063-199000

Flora & Fauna

Because of the pristine natural surroundings in Jämtland and Härjedalen, the plant life is mesmerizing, with many kinds of berries, bushes, mushrooms and other delights. The biggest part of Jämtland and Härjedalen is covered with coniferous forest but there is great diversity, especially in the mountain region. The area around Storsjön is ideal for orchids because of the large amounts of calcium in the ground. The lady's-slipper, for example, is one of the many beautiful orchids you will see here.

Most of Jämtland and northern Sweden is unsettled and therefore has plenty of wild animals such as the four big predators: bears, wolves, lynxes and wolverines. The first three are rare and not easy to spot. But the most characteristic animal of Jämtland is the elk. Another popular animal to hunt has been the beaver, for its skin and meat but also for its scent glands, which excrete a substance used as a medicine centuries ago before the arrival of modern medications. Today, this fluid is still popular but it's now used to flavor schnapps.

Fishing and hunting are popular in Jämtland; fishing in particular is easily accessible to the public. Game birds commonly found in the forests are capercaillie, grouse, black grouse, and hazel hen. The fish include salmon trout, char, grayling, whitefish, perch and pike.

In Härjedalen, the musk ox has been around since 1971 when a flock first crossed the border. Safaris to see these large and quite rare animals have become popular for visitors

THE ELK

The elk is by far the biggest land mammal in Scandinavia. Though generally docile, it should be treated with great respect. An adult elk reaches up to two m (six feet) in height and can weigh 1,000 pounds. Known as "kings of the forest," they are impressive, but they can also create problems. Hundreds of elk and deer are killed every year in traffic accidents. If driving in northern Sweden, look for the yellow and red triangular warning signs with the elk in the middle. If you don't see any signs it could be because some tourists like to take them home as souvenirs (don't!).

Hunting elk has also been a popular tradition, but in Jämtland 50% of the total number are killed every year simply to control their rapid growth. The hunting season starts in September.

In the late 19th century, the elk was almost extinct in Scandinavia but has made an impressive comeback. There are currently over 250,000 in Sweden and they can be found throughout the country, except in the province of Gotland.

Jämtland

Östersund & the Lake Area

❖ Introduction

Östersund, with a population of about 60,000, is the only city in Jämtland-Härjedalen. It is also the most centrally located city in Sweden. For many, it is merely a stop on the way to Åre and skiing or other outdoor activities, which this region is known for. But if you have a day to spend in the Östersund area, there are plenty of things to do. The mountain region in Jämtland is more popular for winter activities but the Östersund and Lake Storsjön area is best visited in the summer. The city was actually designed to allow for a population twice the number that currently lives there, so the downtown area is quite big for a small city, with many shops, restaurants and cafés. The size of Östersund also reflects the fact that the city serves a large region with great distances between cities.

❖ Brief History

The Swedish rulers wanted a monopoly on trading and were annoyed by the successful traders from Jämtland in the 18th century. As a result, King Gustav III founded the city in 1786 near Lake Storsjön. (The name Östersund means East Sound, referring to its location.) The intention was that farmers should deliver their merchandise to middlemen in the city who then sold it to other parts of the country in accordance with the new economic philosophy. The city would slowly grow but not many people from the province were interested in moving there since they all opposed the system of middlemen for their trading.

❖ Practical Information

The **Östersund Tourist Office**, Rådhusgatan 44, ☎ 063-144001, is downtown near the shopping area. It is a great place to collect information, not only about the Jämtland region but for many other destinations in Sweden and Norway.

THE ÖSTERSUND CARD

If you plan to stay in Östersund for a while and visit a lot of the sights and attractions, get the Östersund Card and save some money. The card costs 140 kr/$15 (55 for children) and gets you free or half-price entry to most of the attractions. It's valid for nine days between June 1 and August 22 and can be purchased at the tourist office, hotels and other accommodations, as well as at most of the sights and attractions.

❖ Sightseeing

The island of **Frösön**, where the airport is located, has something to offer for everyone, including several of Östersund's attractions, such as the **Frösö Zoo** and the **Östersund-Frösö Golf Course**. For those seeking a real challenge, there is the **Adventure Course**, where you can test your skills and balance on the aerial ropeway, trapeze and climbing a wall, among other activities. The Adventure Course is only open in the summer. Book your adventures in advance by calling Östersund at ☎ 063-128230.

Don't forget to visit the tower, **Frösötornet**, which takes you to 481 m (1,400 feet) above sea level. From here, you get an incredible view and can see a large part of the province. On a clear day you can even see the mountains of Norway. The tower is open daily between mid-May and mid-September. Also, stop by the **Frösö Church**, from which you have a spectacular view. The island is also great for simply exploring on some of the many hiking paths. For more information and maps, contact the tourist office.

Storsjön (the Great Lake) is the fifth-largest lake in Sweden and it is no coincidence that the only city in the province evolved here. The legend of **Storsjöodjuret (the Great Lake Monster)** has existed for at least four centuries and there have been over 200 documented reports from 500 people who have seen it. Claiming that it's all just a big marketing trick would be an insult to the local residents, and to the monster himself.

Besides, if Loch Ness can have a monster, why can't Storsjön? There was even a theory claiming there was a tunnel connection between the two lakes, implying that the two monsters were one and the same. That theory has yet to be proven.

There have been several attempts over the years to catch it, but since 1986 the monster has been considered a protected species. It's still perfectly legal to shoot it with a camera, however, should you happen to catch a glimpse of the creature. There are eight recommended observation points where you have the best chance to see this long snakelike animal. Ask the tourist office for maps.

You can also take the guided boat trip with *S/S Thomée* departing from the harbor. Even if you don't spot the monster, you'll get a nice tour of the lake. Information about the various tours, including times and prices, can be found at the tourist office and the harbor.

❖ Events

Storsjöyran is the biggest event in town and takes place the last week in July every year in downtown Östersund. The Storsjöyran festival lasts for a whole week but it is the final three days, Friday-Sunday, with their musical performances, that are the highlight. Several of Sweden's top musicians as well as well-known international artists have made appearances here.

❖ Adventures on Foot

Jamtli, a 10-minute walk from downtown Östersund, has been named the best children's museum in Sweden and been around since 1912. As you enter the outdoor area of Jamtli, you find yourself on the main square of Östersund in 1895 when 6,000 people lived in the city and came from all over the province and beyond to look for work. The whole outdoor area takes you back in time and shows you how people lived in this part of Sweden in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Visit the farms where costumed actors tell you about life on a farm and show you how to churn butter, card wool, and many other chores of everyday farm life. The recently built indoor exhibition features a large collection of remains from the Viking

Age, the Stone Age and the Sami people who still live in this region today. This section is also fun for children – they get to open boxes, pull strings and push buttons while learning about the history of these people.

Moose Garden, Orrviken, ☎ 070-363 6061, www.moosegarden.com. At this attraction in Orrviken, just outside Östersund, you can see domesticated elks up close on guided tours, or go up in the observation tower and look for the Great Lake Monster. If you want to take a boat for a ride on the lake, that can also be arranged. Spending the day in Moose Garden will cost 80 kr/$9 (30 kr for children under 16), which includes the tours, offered June-August, every day at 11 am, 1 pm and 3 pm.

The Garden started in 1997 with just two calves. With the arrival of a baby elk two years later, the interest in Moose Garden escalated. Today, it's more than just a zoo; it's a paper factory, with paper made from the droppings of the elks. The paper is made manually by the owners without any energy-demanding machines, is biodegradable and therefore 100% environmentally friendly.

❖ Adventures on Water

Little Lake Hill Canoe Center in Lit, about a 20-minute drive from downtown, is a popular canoe center offering both rentals and instruction if you so desire. A wide variety of routes is available and the staff here can help you choose the right one for you. Fishing is also popular in this area and is available to the public for about 60 kr/$6.40 per day, which covers fishing equipment and a fishing permit. To get there, take Road 45 toward Strömsund and Arvidsjaur, and after 20 minutes you'll see signs for Lit. For bookings and more information call the canoe center at ☎ 0642-10247.

❖ Places to Stay

Ramada Plaza, Kyrkgatan 70, Östersund, ☎ 063-575700, $$$, is a top-quality hotel in the downtown area of Östersund close to shopping and restaurants.

Lit's Camping and Stugby, ☎ 0642-10247, $, www.litscamping.com, on Indalsälven about 15 minutes from

Östersund. Cabins are equipped with showers, TV and microwaves. A popular area for outdoor activities and the campsite has canoe rental service.

STF Hostel Jamtli, ☎ 063-122060, $, is a low-budget alternative on the Jamtli Museum grounds, and is well worth its price.

❖ Places to Eat

Mikado, Grytan 335, 834 98 Brunflo, ☎ 063-20908, $$$$. Just south of Östersund near Road E14 on the way to Brunflo, this little Japanese restaurant is one of the best you will find outside of Japan. Mikado is popular but has a small capacity, so reservations are necessary at all times.

En Liten Röd, Brogränd 19, 83131 Östersund, ☎ 063-126326, $$$. This is a really good restaurant with excellent meat dishes and the best fondue in town. It's on a small side-street away from the shopping streets, which can make it a little hard to find.

Restuarang Hov, Jamtli, ☎ 063-150103, www.jamtli.com, $$. This restaurant inside Jamtli, the open-air museum near downtown Östersund, has a generous buffet lunch with typical Swedish dishes. It's the best deal in town, even if you're not that hungry. Open every day during the summer, Monday-Friday at other times of the year.

Captain Cook, Hamngatan 9, Östersund, ☎ 063-126090, $$. Aussie pub and restaurant in the downtown area of Östersund between the two main pedestrian streets.

Ragunda & Indalsleden

Indalsleden is a route in eastern Jämtland that takes you to a region called Ragunda. It offers a beautiful landscape and some scenes that are unique and, to say the least, a bit unexpected. You may think you've stepped into a whole different world when you encounter the Thai Pavilion in the middle of the forest or the Dead Falls, a former waterfall (see below). The main town in Ragunda is **Hammarstrand**, at the bottom of what used to be Lake Ragunda. This town is one of the few places in Ragunda where you will find banks, shops and restaurants. **Bispgården**, right in between the Dead Falls and

the Thai Pavilion, is a smaller community but also has a few stores and plenty of restaurants to accommodate all the tourists.

❖ Getting Here

To get to Ragunda, either take Road 86 from Sundsvall or Road 87 from Östersund, which together form the route called Indalsleden. Ragunda is right in the middle between the two cities and it takes about one hour from either city by car or bus. Daily bus connections are available to the area. **Midlanda Airport** in Sundsvall and **Östersund/Frösö Airport** are the nearest major airports.

❖ Sightseeing

More than 40,000 people every year visit a waterfall that doesn't exist. The **Dead Falls** can be found along the Indalsleden route on Road 87, between Bispgården and Hammarstrand.

Forestry was big business back in the 18th century and Jämtland had loads of resources. A huge waterfall with over a 100-foot drop named Storforsen was on the Indalsälven River in those days and, while impressive to look at, it created some serious problems. Because of the big elevation change in the river, the lumberjacks couldn't transport their timber through Indalsälven and on to the Baltic Sea. A solution to this problem had been contemplated for years but there was also an opposition, the farmers and the fishermen, who dreaded the consequences of such attempts.

A man named Magnus Huss, right, known as the Wild Huss, was called upon to solve the problem. His idea was to construct an alternate route for the timber around Storforsen by taking advantage of the increasing amount of water created in spring when the snow melts. In 1793 the digging started, but the first three winters didn't produce enough water. In the spring of 1796, however, Huss and his men got more water than they bargained for.

It was June 6th, 1796, at 9 pm when people in eastern Jämtland could hear a big roar. One of the biggest natural disasters in Swedish history, created by the miscalculations of one man and some bad luck, had just taken place.

The tremendous force of water changed the direction of Indalsälven by several miles for good and the nearby lake Ragundasjön, 13 miles long, was drained in less than two hours. In the process, trees, houses, farms with animals, windmills, boats and ferry stations were eliminated in the blink of an eye and all communication to Jämtland was cut off. Supposedly, people in Sundsvall could even pick salmon straight from the pine trees, which is something you don't see every day.

Huss himself drowned a year later after some people deliberately sent him down the river in a boat with no oars. Little did they know that Huss's "failure" would result in fertile grounds for the farmers where the lake had been, two power stations supporting thousands of households and one of the biggest tourist attractions in the area – even today, over 200 years later.

The Thai Pavilion: In 1897 the Swedish king Oskar II invited the Thai King Chulalongkorn for a visit to experience the countryside of central Sweden. After his visit, the power company Vattenfall put up a sign that said "King Chulalongkorn Road." Some Thai visitors noticed the sign while passing through the area about 100 years later. Not long after, some wealthy Thai-Swedes decided to build a pavilion to honor their former king. The king is still regarded highly in their country even today since he abolished slavery, among other accomplishments. The pavilion cost 12 million kr/$1.3 million and is the biggest of its kind outside of Thailand. About 60,000 people visit this masterpiece every year. It is just a few minutes south of Bispgården along Road 86 toward Sundsvall.

❖ Places to Stay

Hotel Indalsleden, Hallvägen 3, Bispgården, ☎ 0696-30505, www.indalsleden.com, $$$. The hotel has 12 single rooms and four double rooms, with plenty of extra beds available. Rooms for disabled person are also available.

Hotel Hammarstrand, Gullbacken, Hammarstrand, ☎ 0696-10780, $$$. A small, picturesque hotel with 49 beds in 31 rooms. Guests have access to a sauna and there is also a very good restaurant on the premises.

Hotel Liden, Lidenvägen 92, Liden, ☎ 0692-10340, www.hotelliden.nu. This is 60 km (36 miles) inland from Sundsvall on Road 86, on the so-called Indalsleden route, toward Östersund. The hotel also arranges guided tours of all the attractions along this route.

Spökprästgården, Borgvattnet, Stugun, ☎ 0695-50081, $$, open May-October. Those who dare can spend a night at a haunted vicarage in Borgvattnet, 30 minutes north of Hammarstrand. The house is over 100 years old and the owners, and most of the people who have stayed here, are convinced that the house is haunted. Don't forget to document your own experiences with the ghosts in the guest book before you leave.

❖ Places to Eat

Paviljong Terassen, ☎ 0696-32090, restaurant and café just across from the Thai Pavilion, serving real Thai food as well as traditional Swedish dishes.

The Mountain Region

❖ Åre

The best place for skiing in Sweden can be debated but there is little doubt about which is the most famous resort. Åre has been a popular place for visitors ever since the railroad was built to connect Östersund and Trondheim in the late 19th century. The town became increasingly popular as a tourist destination and, as more and more ski lifts were built right after the Second World War, Åre became the alpine center of the region. Its location in the mountains also appeals to many people because of its proximity to some of the best hiking routes in Sweden.

More than 300,000 tourists visit the Åre area every year and the majority come for the skiing. Lately, however, Åre has become increasingly popular in the summer thanks to the numerous activities available once the snow has melted. Mountain biking is one of these and the challenging terrain here is ideal for an adventure on two wheels.

Walking around in the old Åre village is a must while you are here. The picturesque little town has a 13th-century church with a beautiful stone exterior and painted wooden interior where you can also see a statue of St Olav of Norway. Åre was a popular stop for several centuries when thousands of people went on pilgrimages to Trondheim and the grave of St Olav.

❖ When to Go

The winter is still the most popular season. The busiest time is naturally around holidays such as Christmas, New Years and Easter, but February-March is also a time when the schools in Sweden have week-long holidays. The breaks vary from region to region, but count on mid-February to mid-March as the busiest time. If summer activities are more appealing to you, June-August is the best time to go.

❖ Getting Here

A car can be good for getting around once you are there, but if you only plan to stay in and around Åre, the train is probably the best way to get there. Take the night-train from Stockholm or Gothenburg and you can wake up fresh instead of having to recover from many hours of driving. The drive from Stockholm, for example, is a good seven hours if weather conditions are good. Night-buses are also available from Stockholm two-three times per week, but I would recommend trains from most cities as they are more comfortable and not much more expensive. Flying into the Östersund Airport is another option, and from there you can take the bus up to Åre, which is not much more than one hour. To find out specific times, prices and special offers, contact **Ski Star**, ☎ 0771-840000, www.skistar.com/are.

❖ Nightlife

Åre is without a doubt the best place in Sweden to combine skiing and nightlife. There are numerous bars, restaurants and nightclubs in the main village and some of the most famous musicians and entertainers in Sweden come to Åre every year to perform. **Tott Hotel**, **Hotel Diplomat**, **Country Club** and **Bygget** are some of the popular places for nightlife.

❖ Adventures on Snow

With 40 lifts and 100 slopes, the **skiing** in Åre is well-suited for every category of skier, from advanced to beginner. Sälen, the popular resort in Dalarna, is technically bigger with more lifts and slopes, but statistics can be deceiving. The slopes in Åre are much longer, the longest being 6½ km (four miles), and they allow for more exciting skiing, with a total drop of 890 m (3,000 feet). The summit, Åreskutan, is one of Sweden's highest peaks at 1,420 m (4,500 feet) and the cable car takes you nearly all the way up. The overall quality of skiing in Åre is the closest you can come in this part of Europe to skiing in the Alps. With an annual World Cup race held here, Åre also hosted the World Championships of skiing in 1954, and will host another in 2007.

The biggest attractions for skiing enthusiasts are the slopes above the tree line at the top of the mountain. This area is what separates Åre from the other Scandinavian ski resorts. The ultimate experience is to take the downhill slope "störtloppet" down to the tree line and then follow it down to the basin. You have to be careful, however, when skiing the section that starts right after you've reached the tree line. This part is extremely steep and is regarded as one of the most challenging downhill slopes in Europe. Thankfully, there are two more slopes to choose from for amateurs and people without health insurance. One of them, **Gästrappet**, is the host to World Cup skiers every year and is regarded as one of the best slalom slopes in northern Europe. **Lundsrappet**, the third option, is also a good choice. All slopes mentioned are easily accessed by the main lift system in the village of Åre.

Apart from the dangerous downhill slope where the tree line starts, watch out for the roped-off areas. They are closed for a good reason.

Both Gästrappet and Lundsrappet are equipped with a floodlight system, which comes in handy in the dark winter months of Scandinavia. Night skiing is popular in Åre and the

illuminated slopes at night actually have much better visibility than in daylight hours, when the light is dim.

> **Did You Know?** The lights of the illuminated slopes in Åre are so bright that when they were first installed, NASA called up authorities in Sweden and asked if they knew what this strange light picked up on their satellites could possibly be. They were probably a bit surprised at the answer.

Around the Village

Besides the village of Åre, the heart of the region, there are three other villages nearby at your disposal on the same lift ticket: Åre Björnen, Duved and Tegefjäll.

Åre Björnen is especially good for families with small children. The slopes here are not challenging but the lift system is directly connected to the steep slopes of Åreskutan. There is also accommodation available here and some amenities, such as a shop with ski rental service and a grocery store.

Duved is well-suited for all kinds of skiers. The slopes here are wide and generally a bit friendlier than the ones in Åre, though you can find some really challenging slopes here as well. Duved appeals to families with teenagers and perhaps those that want to enjoy good skiing but prefer to avoid the hustle and bustle of Åre village. Telemark skiers really seem to enjoy themselves in Duved. You have all the amenities in the village as well.

Tegefjäll is not really a village but rather a group of cabins built right on the slope with quick and easy access to skiing. The lifts at Tegefjäll are connected with the system in Duved. For those in Tegefjäll/Duved who wish to ski Åreskutan, there are bus transfers available.

Ski Rentals

Rent equipment for skiing, snowboarding or telemark at one of the local rental companies. There are nine available in Åre village and more in the surrounding villages. Call **Skidåkarna** for more information, ☎ 0647-50405.

Lift Tickets: A daily lift pass costs around 300 kr/$32 (245 for children ages eight-15; children younger than eight ski for free if they wear a helmet). A half-day pass costs only 20 kr less so it's hardly worth the wait to save money. It can be a good idea, however, to cut your expenses by buying a pass for multiple days if you know how long you will be staying. For information on the lifts, call **Åreliftarna**, ☎ 0647-13000.

Ski School

If you are a beginner or feel the need to improve your skills, book a ski lesson with **Åre Ski School**, ☎ 0647-17700. They have a well-trained staff and can teach you how to ski or snow board, either in a group or in private.

Cross-Country Skiing

If you prefer skiing horizontally for a day, there are plenty of options. **Ullådalen**, which can be reached easily by car or bus from Åre, is probably the best starting point for cross-country skiing in the area. From here, you will soon find yourself skiing above the tree line with some spectacular views.

For skiing in easier terrain, the 15-km (nine-mile) **Fäbodturen**, starting in Åre Björnen, on tracks through tall spruces, will meet your needs. For maps and information on other tracks, contact the tourist office in Åre, ☎ 0647-17720.

Dog Sledding

This is one of the best ways you can experience the mountains of Jämtland. Let the Alaskan huskies pull you into the wilderness. The guides will provide their assistance but, if you wish, you "drive" yourself. Prices are around 500 kr/$53 per person for two hours and 600 kr/$64 for a half-day trip.

Åre Sleddog Adventures in Undersåker, 15 km (nine miles) east of Åre, is a well established company with experienced guides. ☎ 0647-30381, www.aresleddog.se. For other options, check with the tourist office in Åre.

❖ On Water

The rapids in the rivers around Åre are some of the best-suited for whitewater rafting in the country. Boogie surfing is a less well-known activity done on your stomach using something like a surf board. For those who like exciting kayaking, few places in this part of the world can match the rapids in the rivers of western Jämtland.

Two companies organize river adventures:

JoPe Fors & Fjäll, Slagsån, Järpen, ☎ 0647-31465.

Åreguiderna, Åre, ☎ 0647-13970.

Fishing

The rivers Dammån, Kvisslesträmmen, Grevsjöströmmen, Åreälven and Ånnsjön Lake are some of the best places for fishing you will find around Åre and, for that matter, in the whole country. These are among the best waters in Sweden for salmon trout and char. Dammån in particular is famous for its big salmon trout. Don't forget to buy permits. (For more information about permits, see *Fishing*, page 65.)

❖ On Foot

Hiking

There are many places in the Åre region suited for hiking. Taking the cable-car to the summit is the most popular choice. Hiking your way down to the valley on one of the bike trails is an option but perhaps not the best for your legs. Instead, walk around on the summit and take the cable-car down again.

Another suggestion, especially if you have your own transport, is to drive toward Östersund and, after about 15 km (nine miles) take a right, just before you get to Undersåker. This road, heading south, will take you to villages like Dalen, Ottsjö, Vallbo and Vålådalen, from where you can start some scenic hikes on the treeless soil. The area offers some of the best hiking you can find, but you have to be aware of the weather conditions, which can be brutal here. Ask locals, or

the tourist offices, for advice on where to go and especially when to go.

❖ In the Air

Paragliding

Sky Sport, Årevägen 3, Box 111, 83013 Åre, ☎ 0647-51186 and 070-5699392. Sky Sport is the biggest paragliding company in Sweden, operating in Åre among other places.

❖ On Wheels

Mountain Biking

Åre will probably always be more associated with alpine skiing than any other sport, but lately the summer activities such as mountain biking have become much more popular. Åreskutan is as challenging as it gets for bikers, which is one of the reasons the World Championships were held here in 1999. After taking the cableway up to the top, there are 10 marked trails to choose from. You will experience some spectacular views of the valley before riding into the woods, making your way down the mountain toward the village.

Åre Mountain Bike Company, ☎ 0647-50888, by the cableway base, offers bike rentals. Daily rates range from around 400 kr/$43.

Sightseeing

❖ Tännforsen

One of the most impressive waterfalls in Sweden where sometimes up to 200,000 gallons of water fall every second. At 37 m (110 feet), it is not the highest in Sweden but take the 60-m (180-foot) width into account and you get the biggest waterfall in the country. About 45,000 people visit every year, making it one of the most popular sights in Jämtland. The best time to go is in the spring or summer when the amount of water is greatest. In the winter, most of the water is frozen, which is also a spectacular sight. It's only a 15-minute drive west of Åre, past Duved, and is set up well for visitors with paths and view points. The scenery here is breathtaking.

❖ Njarka Sami Camp

Experience the life of a Sami for a day. Any questions you might have about the indigenous people of northern Europe will be answered here. You learn about the culture and history and even get some hands-on experience with roping and fishing. The camp isLake Häggsjön near Tännforsen and is only open in July and the beginning of August, Tuesdays-Fridays. 120 kr/$13 for adults and guided tours are available in English. Bookings are recommended, ☎ 0647-25042. Read more about the Sami people in the *Introduction*, page 19.

Places to Stay

There are plenty of hotel rooms and apartments to rent, but many are quite expensive and the demand is also high during peak season. An alternative can be cabins just outside the village. The bad thing about those, if you are here for skiing, is that you have to walk for a while or count on transportation to get to the slopes every day. Call **Ski Star**, ☎ 0771-840000, who can help you out with bookings. The tourist office can also help find accommodations, ☎ 0647-17720.

Hotel Diplomat, Åregården, the main square, ☎ 0647-17960, www.diplomathotel.com, $$$$. Diplomat is a first-class hotel in the center of the main village of Åre. It's also popular for its nightclub. There are 18 single rooms, 30 double rooms, four mini-suites and two full suites.

Åre Continental Inn, Regnbågen 1, Åre, ☎ 0647-17170, $$-$$$. $$-$$$. One of the biggest hotels in Åre, and very reasonable. The hotel can accommodate 400 people in its 106 rooms. Rooms are equipped with very comfortable beds and the hotel also has a gym, pool, movie theater, sauna, solarium and much more.

The North

❖ The Wilderness Road & Frostviken

You've heard the expression "I'm not in the middle of nowhere but I can see it from here." Well, when you get to northern Jämtland, you don't have to look far. Frostviken is at the northern tip of Jämtland. The Wilderness Road, from

Strömsund in Jämtland to Vilhelmina in Lappland, takes you through the area and offers some great scenery along the way. There is nothing that even resembles a city in this area, but **Gäddede**, with a population of 500, has a bank, a few stores and gas stations. The area around Frostviken is wilderness in its purest form. You can walk around here for days, even weeks, without meeting anyone, except maybe a few reindeer here and there.

❖ Getting Here & Getting Around

To get here from Östersund, you take Road 45 (the Inland Road) to Strömsund and from there, Road 342 (the Wilderness Road). It will take you a good three hours and, if you don't have a car, there are daily bus connections. For more information, ☎ 020-616263 or 063-168400, www.lanstrafiken-z.se.

❖ Adventures

On Foot

The **Coral Cave** is just north of Stora Blåsjön and close to the Norwegian border. This amazing creation of nature has been around at least since the last Ice Age, 10,000 years ago, and probably much longer than that; surprisingly, though, it was not discovered until 1985. It is also the longest cave in Sweden with over six km (four miles) of tunnels and halls. These were createdwater dissolving the limestone, which also formed some beautiful blue formations in the cave. Exploring the cave is a fun experience but bear in mind that it is not for the claustrophobic.

Guided tours are offered on Tuesdays and Saturdays, 10 am-5 pm and cost 450 kr/$48. Lunch and basic equipment such as helmet and gloves are included in the price but you might want to bring good walking shoes or boots and warm clothes. The tour starts with a one-hour walk to the cave and the cave itself is fairly cold even in the summer.

Booking in advance is necessary. For more information or bookings, contact the tourist office in Frostviken, ☎ 0672-10500, during the summer, or the guide service, **Rid i Jorm**, ☎ 0672-20171, in spring, fall or winter.

❖ Sightseeing

Hällingsåfallet

This waterfall is an impressive 43 m high (140 feet) and it's in the longest water-filled canyon in northern Europe. Situated a couple of miles south of Gäddede, the canyon is 800 m (2,600 feet) long with walls up to 60 m (200 feet) high. To get to the falls you can either take your car or walk the 2½-km (1½-mile) hiking trail on the edge of the canyon for some spectacular views. For those seeking a more thrilling adventure, try canyoning, organized**Rid i Jorm**, ☎ 0672-20171.

❖ Places to Stay

Blåsjöns Fjällby, Stora Blåsjön, ☎ 0672-21199, along the Wilderness Road about 10 km (six miles) south of the Coral Cave.

Härjedalen

The Mountains

The mountain region of Härjedalen is mostly characterizedforests, farming and reindeer herding, but tourism has increased significantly over the last decades. The three main areas here are **Hede**, **Funäsdalen** and **Lofsdalen**. **Sonfjället National Park** is the biggest reason to visit the Hede area, where you may spot a bear if you're lucky. The little village of Funäsdalen has, as the central point of western Härjedalen, long been an important stop on journeys to Norway. Today, the area around Funäsdalen is well known for its skiing in the winter but it's perfectly suited for outdoor activities in the summer too. Lofsdalen is a small mountain village in the western part of central Härjedalen. The town is mostly famous for its skiing but has plenty to offer in the summer as well. It was through the Lofsdalen area that the pilgrims traveled on their way to Trondheim to the Nidaros Cathedral at the beginning of the last millennium. (Read more about this under Trondheim in the Norway chapter, pages 339 ff.)

Adventures

❖ On Foot

Bear Safari

The Sonfjället National Park is just south of the municipality of Hede, between Sveg and the mountains. It is the only national park in Härjedalen and was established in 1909 mainly to protect the bears in the area. The bear is the animal symbol of the province and Sonfjället is the best place in the country for bear safaris. There is no guarantee that you will see bears in the wild but Sonfjället is the most bear-rich area in Scandinavia and you have at least a 30% chance of catching a glimpse of one here. Contact **Hede Tourist Office** for more information on these safaris, ☎ 0684-41080.

THE BEAR

There are seven kinds of bears in the world. The Scandinavian kind is the brown bear (*Ursus Arctos*), also known as the grizzly in North America. In the mid-19th century, there were about 5,000 bears in Scandinavia but, after an intense hunting period, that number was down to just a couple of hundred. Today, there are 1,000-1,500, and most are found in northwest Sweden. There is no longer any risk of extinction and, thanks to a regulated hunt nowadays, the number of bears increases5-10% every year.

The bear is the biggest predator in Sweden and can weigh up to 650 pounds. Despite its impressive size, it is normally quite shy and will not bother humans unless threatened. Bears are not commonly spotted in the wild, but should you be lucky enough to encounter one, beware, especially if it's a cub, as its mother is usually not far away. In the last 100 years only one man has been killeda bear in Sweden. This happened in October of 2004 when a hunter was killed outside Jokkmokk in northern Lappland.

❖ Hiking

Flatruet is the name of the road between Funäsdalen and Ljungdalen and it's the highest road in Sweden, with some spectacular views. It is also an interesting area historically since you can see rock paintings here that are 4,000-6,000 years old. The area around Ljungdalen is the perfect setting for hiking, for example up to **Helags**, Sweden's southernmost glacier with the country's highest peak south of the Arctic Circle. The hike up to Helags is a pleasant one, not too demanding and only takes a few hours. For a real challenge, you can climb all the way up to the peak at 1,797 m (5,400 feet), from where you get an incredible view of the glacier and all the surrounding mountains.

On Wheels

❖ Biking in Lofsdalen

There are 40 km (25 miles) of hiking and biking trails around Lake Lofssjön. Biking in the area gives you a great opportunity to explore nature and a good chance to see some of the wild animals, such as reindeer, elk and beaver.

Getting There

Lofsdalen is 70 km (45 miles) west of Sveg. If you don't have a car, the bus company Härjedalingen has a direct line from Stockholm via Sveg. The nearest train station is Ljusdal, 190 km away (120 miles), with bus service on to Lofsdalen via Sveg. You can also fly to Sveg and take the bus from there.

Rent your bikes at **Karin's Sportbod**, www.karins-sportbod.se. They have reasonably priced bikes in all sizes, for all kinds of terrain.

On Water

❖ Canoeing

Some of the best canoeing waters you will ever find are right here in western Härjedalen. The river **Ljusnan** near Funäsdalen is an excellent choice, as is **Lake Rogen** right on the border of

the province of Dalarna and Norway. Lake Rogen is considered one of the best lakes for canoeing because of the untouched and tranquil nature, but getting there is a bit of a challenge. When driving south from Funäsdalen, you'll soon get to the village of Tännäs; from there, follow the signs toward Käringsjön (south). From Käringsjön, the terrain is too barren for cars so you'll need to hike the last stretch with the canoe. If you plan to stay out there for a while and want the ultimate experience, it's definitely worth it. If a daytrip is all you have in mind then Ljusnan is probably a better option for you. The river is easily accessible from Funäsdalen. Good starting points are Bruksvallarna and Flon north of Funäsdalen toward Ramundberget.

The main place for canoe rentals is **Topsport**, ☎ 0684-21435, www.topsport.se, which is in the center of Funäsdalen village. One daytrip on Ljusnan costs 380 kr/$40 for two people.

On Snow

❖ Skiing

You can't go wrong skiing in the mountains of Härjedalen. The province is the highest in Sweden with over 40 peaks above 1,000 m (3,000 feet) and the lowest point is 350 m (1,000 feet) above sea level. Funäsdalen is, next to Riksgränsen in northern Lappland, the resort in Sweden where you have the best chance for snow early and late in the season. Thanks to the altitude, snow is hardly ever produced artificially; in fact, there is a snow guarantee between November 1 and April 30. The amount of snow, combined with the 31 lifts and 90 slopes, allows for some great skiing, something the people of Funäsdalen pride themselves on. Some popular sections in Funäsdalen, beside the village of Funäsdalen, are Tänndalen and Ramundberget. **Tänndalen** is the biggest ski resort in **Härjedalen** and is also popular with cross-country skiers.

Places to Stay and Eat

Hotel Funäsdalen, ☎ 0684-21430, $$$. This is a comfortable hotel in the middle of Funäsdalen with breathtaking views. There are 49 rooms, which include single rooms, doubles and even

rooms with four beds. There is also a very good restaurant at the hotel. Both the restaurant and hotel are open all year.

Gyllene Bocken, Ljusnedal, ☎ 0684-21090, $$-$$$. This charming inn with adjacent restaurant is in a scenic area in the mountain region of Härjedalen. It's open from November to April and June to September.

STF Hostel Ljungdalen, Dunsjögården, ☎ 0687-20285, $. A good starting point for those who plan to hike up the glacier Helags.

■ The Bothnian Coast

Introduction

The northern half of the Baltic Sea is called the Gulf of Bothnia. It starts around the Finnish island of Åland in the middle of the Baltic Sea and is borderedFinland in the east and northern Sweden (Norrland) in the west. One of the most scenic sections on your way up north is known as the High Coast, which is between Härnösand and Örnsköldsvik. Many of the cities along the Bothnian Coast such as Umeå, Luleå, Piteå and Sundsvall were founded around 1621-1622 by King Gustav II Adolf, at a time when the Swedish empire was vast and Finland also belonged to Sweden. Another common denominator among many of these cities is that they suffered from devastating fires in the late 19th century. Sundsvall and Umeå both had to deal with these catastrophes in 1888, although they had different ideas of how to rebuild their cities. In Sundsvall, all houses were built of stone instead of wood, while in Umeå they planted birch trees, which supposedly would prevent future fires from spreading.

Getting Here & Getting Around

By Plane

Midlanda Airport in Sundsvall is the main airport on the southern section of the Bothnian Coast. Midlanda has connections with Stockholm, Gothenburg and Luleå. **SAS** and **Skyways** are the two biggest airlines flying the route. The main airport for

the northern coast is **Kallax Airport** in Luleå. Kallax has flights mainly to Stockholm, Sundsvall and Umeå. The flight from Stockholm to Kallax takes about an hour and 15 minutes.

By Car

The E4 highway takes you up and down the coast near and often through the cities on the coast. It would be faster if the highway went just outside the cities instead of straight through them. Nevertheless, a car is a great way to get around in northern Sweden, especially if you want to make a few detours from the coastline where public transportation is not as extensive as in the south.

By Bus

Norrlandsbussen has bus connections from Sundsvall to Luleå several times per day. You can also reach the area from Stockholm with **Y-buss**. Check schedules at www.dintur.se and www.ybuss.se.

By Train

You can take the train from Stockholm and all the way up to Luleå but you won't be traveling along the coast for much of this journey. At present, the trains are slow and meandering, not stopping at any of the coastal cities north of Sundsvall except for Umeå and Luleå. Botniabanan, a new route due to be completed in 2008, will connect the coastal cities from Härnösand in the south to Umeå in the north and possibly even farther.

> **Did You Know?** When it was decided that the railroad should be extended into northern Sweden at the end of the 19th century, wars and invasions from other countries were still factors to consider. The northern section of the Bothnian Coast had suffered greatly in the early 19th century from battles with the Russian armies, which resulted in Sweden losing Finland to Russia. This is why they built the railroad so far inland. It was deemed too risky to build it near the coastline in those days.

The High Coast

Introduction

The High Coast (Höga Kusten) is one of the most beautiful areas in Sweden. It stretches from Härnösand all the way up to Örnsköldsvik, has the highest elevation changes of any coastline in the country and features numerous attractions. Visitors can spend several days, even weeks on the High Coast and still leave sights unseen. The first people settled in this area probably some 8,000 years ago. Hunting and fishing were the main occupations in those days but in the 19th century the forest industry became dominant and the many rivers in the province allowed for convenient transportation of timber. Today, some of the leading paper industries are in the area and the rivers also contribute to a lot of the energy produced in the country.

❖ Why is it a High Coast?

The High Coast was formed as a result of the latest Ice Age more than 10,000 years ago. During this era, the ice layer was three km (two miles) deep, a lot thicker than elsewhere along the coast. The ice pressed the crust of the earth down several hundred meters before the ice finally started to retreat. Since then, the earth has rebounded and risen almost 800 m (2,500 feet), which is a world record. As a result, where the shore line was 10,000 years ago is today 286 m (940 feet) above sea level. Even today, the land continues to rise by a third of an inch each year.

Örnsköldsvik

Per Abraham Örnsköld was the county governor, and Örnsköldsvik is one of the few cities in Sweden named after a person who was not royalty. Örnsköldsvik is the biggest city in the High Coast region and a good place to stop for shopping, restaurants and accommodation. Other than that, there is not a whole lot going on in the city, otherwise known mostly for its paper industry. One of these companies, MoDo gave the local ice-hockey team its name, a team known for producing some of the best players in the world. **Örnsköldsvik Tourist Office**, Nygatan 18, ☎ 0660-88100.

Sightseeing

❖ The High Coast Bridge

Once you pass the picturesque town of **Härnösand** going north you encounter the majestic High Coast Bridge. Built in the mid-1990s, it is one of the longest suspension bridges in the world at 1.8 km (one mile), only slightly shorter than the Golden Gate Bridge. The design, combined with its views, makes it one of the most fascinating structures in Sweden. On the north side of the bridge there is a hotel with a restaurant overlooking the beautiful river Ångermanälven underneath the bridge. Outside the hotel is a big playground area for the kids and a moose garden with guided tours every hour. If you wish to explore the views and landscape further, why not take the hiking trail, **Högakustenleden**, starting next to the parking lot of the hotel and ending at Örnsköldsvik, which also marks the end (or beginning) of the High Coast. Walk the entire 130 km (78 miles) and you'll catch most of what this area has to offer.

In November 2000, the High Coast joined the distinguished list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Ulvön

Ulvön is a little island off the High Coast sometimes referred to as "the pearl of the Bothnian Sea" and with good reason. Literally translated, the name Ulvön means "the island of the wolf," but none of the residents seem to know how the name came about. One man says there must have been wolves on the island at some point, although there is no documented evidence of this. There are 47 permanent residents on Ulvön and all of them live near the harbor.

One of the benefits of Ulvön, as with many islands off the coast, is that the weather is often better here than on the mainland. It is not uncommon to leave the mainland on a cloudy or rainy day, then spend the rest of the day at Ulvön in sunshine.

Just like the coastline here, the islands are quite hilly. Lotsberget is the most famous peak and you get a great view of the High Coast from here. If you haven't understood why

this coastline is a World Heritage Site after seeing it from up here, you probably never will. From the mountain you get a great view of the harbor on Ulvön with the Bothnian Sea in the background. Turn your head to the right and you will see Högbonden, a lighthouse no longer in use that now houses a youth hostel and a museum. **Mjältön**, the highest island in Sweden at 236 m (700 feet) above sea level, lies between Ulvön and the mainland. You can get an even better look at Mjältön if you take the ferry from Docksta, which passes it on your left. This island is a popular destination for visitors as well as locals, though it's a little trickier for tourists to get there since no public transportation is available.

❖ Travel Details

During high season, there are daily boat connections from Ullånger, Docksta, Mjällomslandet, Örnsköldsvik and Köpmanholmen. Fares cost around 120-150 kr/$13-16 round-trip and take 1½-2½ hours, depending on where you start. I recommend that you book your tickets at least one day in advance, especially in July and August. For boats from the following ports, call the numbers below:

- From Örnsköldsvik, ☎ 0660-223431 or 070-6916931, www.skargardslinjen.se.
- From Köpmanholmen, ☎ 0660-299021 or 070-6519265.
- From Ullånger, Mjällomslandet and Docksta, ☎ 0613-10550, www.hkship.se.

❖ Surströmming

Ulvö Harbor used to be one of the largest fishing harbors in northern Sweden and produced large quantities of fermented Baltic herring (surströmming). Traditions die hard and, even today, Ulvön is considered the center of surströmming in Sweden. This little smelly fish is primarily a tradition in the north of Sweden but is just as famous in the southern parts of the country (though generally not as appreciated).

I suppose there are some things in life that you either love or hate and the taste of surströmming would be one of those. Some people can't even be near it because of its stench while others consider it a delicacy and can't live without it. It is an acquired taste and should be given a decent chance. The biggest day of the year for surströmming fanatics is the third

Thursday in August when they get together to celebrate and feast. Read more about where to go for surströmming on Ulvön under *Places to Eat*, page 245.

The problem today is that there is a shortage of herring in the Baltic Sea, which has forced up prices considerably. Many of the big fishing boats today use a method known as "scrape fishing," which could eliminate herring completely in the near future. The traditional way of fishing is done on smaller boats with nets containing big enough holes so that the little fish that need another year to grow can escape. That way they can also reproduce and the cycle will never have to be broken. Unfortunately, the companies that own these big boats don't seem to realize the consequences of their actions. The shortage of herring will not have any serious short-term effects. The big companies will sell less but make the same profit. In the long run, however, there will be no more fish and a tradition, several centuries old, could come to an end for many. Let's hope things won't go that far, but prices will most definitely go up and only the real surströmming fanatics will keep buying.

Skuleberget & Skuleskogen

Skuleberget (the Skule Mountain) and **Skuleskogen (the Skule Forest)** are two nature reserves in the center of the High Coast. Not only is this the geographical center, but it is also where a lot of adventures take place. The tourist information center for this area, **Naturum**, is at the base of Skuleberget and is the starting point for visitors to both Skuleberget and Skuleskogen. The staff here is friendly and helpful and will provide you with any kind of information about the area. The view from the top of the mountain is spectacular and should be at the top of your list of things to do. There are two ways of getting here. Either walk the path leading up the hillside or take the lift, on the south side of the mountain. The hike up to the top starts by **Skule Naturum**, takes about one hour and is quite demanding. To get to the lift, get on the E4 highway going south from Skule Naturum and take the first exit on your right. From there it's a three-minute drive until you see it on your right. The price for saving your legs is 70 kr/$7.50. At the top, you will find a little café where you can enjoy a snack or light lunch while looking out over the incredible scenery.

Skuleskogen is a national park and was inaugurated in 1984 to preserve the special wildlife in the forest. Guided tours of the national park are available in the summer and start at Skule Naturum. By far the most famous sight in the park is **Slåtterdalsskrevan**. This gorge is 200 m (600 feet) long, six m (18 feet) wide and a whopping 40 m (240 feet) deep, which makes you feel pretty small when you walk through it. There are many interesting paths on the premises and a good idea is to hike the well-known hiking trail, **Högakustenleden**, which takes you through most of them, including **Slåtterdalsskrevan**. Read more about Högakustenleden under *Hiking*, page 240.

Tip: The walk to the national park is all uphill and takes longer than you might think. Plan to spend at least half a day here but there is no need to rush. This kind of scenery can't be found in other parts of the country and can only be compared with the fjords of Norway.

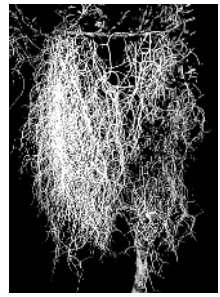
❖ Getting Here

Skule Naturum is just off the E4 highway near Docksta, about 40 km (24 miles) south of Örnsköldsvik. Skuleskogen is a short drive from Skule Naturum. Take the E4 south about 500 m (500 yards) and turn left at the sign that says "Nationalpark." You have to park the car at a designated lot and then walk the rest of the way. You can also enter the park from the north if you are coming from Örnsköldsvik. Even from here you have to park the car and walk the rest of the way. The distance and elevation are about the same from the north side as it is from the south.

❖ Plant & Animal Life in Skuleskogen National Park

There are over 260 different plant species in Skuleskogen National Park, which is a lot considering its size. This area is also like a botanical border zone between the north and the south of Sweden, which makes the plant life special. Many southern plants have their northern border here and vice versa. The reason why the southerly plants and trees can make it this far north is because the climate was much

warmer 5,000-8,000 years ago; even when the climate got colder the plants in Skuleskogen endured, thanks to the favorable soil. Some examples of southern plants that normally can't be found this far north are linden, maple trees, hazel trees and fescue. Some of northerly plants include the alpine sow thistle, Scottish asphodel, alpine saw-wort and alpine catchfly. Perhaps the most extraordinary plant in the woods is the beard-lichen, shown at right. It grows on spruce trees and looks, as the name indicates, like a beard hanging down from the branches.



The animal life in Skuleskogen is also diverse. All four of Sweden's game birds, capercaillie, hazel hen, black grouse and willow grouse, are found here. You can also find most of the common mammals such as elk, roe deer, lynx, fox, gopher, mink, hare and squirrel. Skuleskogen is sometimes called woodpecker country and woodpeckers really thrive in this kind of area with old trees and quiet surroundings.

Adventures

❖ On Foot

The Ulvö Chapel

There are two churches on the island. One of them, the Ulvö Chapel, is from the 17th century and a must to visit. When the new church was built in the beginning of the 19th century, the islanders wanted to tear down the old one for financial reasons. It would simply be too expensive to maintain it so they asked the king for permission and he granted their wish in 1888. However, nobody did anything for two years and, when the king (Oskar II) stopped by for a visit, he was so impressed by the chapel that he insisted the people of Ulvön not destroy it. Back in those days, the king of Sweden had a lot of power and influence so the old chapel was never touched and is today the oldest fishing chapel on the coast.

FISHING CHAPELS ON THE HIGH COAST

In the 16th century, fishermen from Gävle, between the High Coast and Stockholm, came to this area and built little cottages to store their fish and equipment. In those days, religion was much more important to people in Sweden than it is today. Even the fishermen were required to attend church, especially on Sundays when fishing was not allowed. As a trip to the mainland would be a hassle every week, they decided to build a chapel/fishing cottage. Officially it was for religious purposes, but to the fishermen from Gävle it was more like another place to store all their stuff. Many of the old wooden houses remain today but the oldest one is on Ulvön, dating from 1622.

Other chapels on the High Coast worth a visit are:

- **Marviksgrunnan** on the southern part of Ulvön, containing many old artifacts, such as a Madonna sculpture from 1350.
- **Barsta** in Nordingrå, known as "the summer house of God," was built in 1665. It's painted inside by Roland Johansson Öberg who also painted the chapel in Ulvö Harbor.

The Iron Age Village of Gene

When Gene, just south of Örnsköldsvik, was discovered by accident in the mid-1970s it baffled scientists and historians all over the country. The items found could be dated back to the early Iron Age and, according to what they thought they knew, there was no evidence of people living in this area at that time. History books were rewritten and Örnsköldsvik had a new attraction. After the archaeologists had had their fun with 15 years of digging, the village was reconstructed according to what they thought it looked like in the sixth century and an open-air museum was created. Visitors get to experience hands-on what it was like to live in those days by trying the old techniques of baking, craftsmanship and archery. Gene Fornby Bäckagården, Domsjö, ☎ 0660-53710 or

0660-53725. Open daily in the summer from late June to early August with guided tours, exhibitions and other activities offered.

Hiking

Högakustenleden, the High Coast Trail, is 130 km (78 miles) long, stretching from the High Coast Bridge by the river Ångermanälven to Varvsberget in Örnsköldsvik. The trail is divided into 13 stages, ranging from easy to difficult, and there are plenty of cabins and a few campsites to spend the night in along the way. All cabins are available to the public and free of charge, though they cannot be pre-booked. In the summer, the cabins are likely to be occupied so you have to be prepared to share. About 25% of Högakustenleden is in Skuleskogen, which is one of the most demanding sections. When planning your hiking trip, start by visiting one of the tourist offices in the area and pick up a map. Besides the tourist offices in Örnsköldsvik and Kramfors, you can visit Skule Naturum and the Höga Kusten Hotel for assistance (see *Places to Stay*, page 244). Ask which paths are best suited for your needs.

Tip: It's important to wear good walking shoeswhen hiking, but in the spring and fall the ground is usually quite wet and boots are recommended.

Arnäsleden is a 70-km (42-mile) trail just north of Örnsköldsvik in the Gideå area. where you also find some interesting caves. Arnäsleden is an easy walk, not nearly as challenging as certain parts of Högakustenleden. You can get there by bus from Örnsköldsvik and, if you arrive at the city's airport, in Gideå, you're basically there already.

Climbing

Skuleberget has excellent facilities and offers an exciting journey up the steep mountain with spectacular views. There are two routes to choose from; the easier one is marked white and the more advanced is red. The office and starting point is next to Skule

Naturum and you pay only 100 kr/$10.70 per person, which includes all the basic equipment. Opening hours are 10 am-4 pm in June and August and 10 am-7 pm in July.

For the really advanced climbers looking for the best climbing on the High Coast, **Gideå**, just southwest of Örnsköldsvik, is recommended. Another good area for climbing is **Rösåsberget** in Moliden, west of Örnsköldsvik. Call **Höga Kustens Klätterklubb** for more information, ☎ 0660-17393.

For indoor climbing, **Paradisbadet** in Örnsköldsvik offers a wall if you feel the need for climbing in the winter.

The Caves

Many caves have been created on the High Coast due to erosion and they are worth exploring. The most famous one is called **Kungsgrottan** and is in Skuleberget. The name Kungsgrottan means the king's cave and it commenorates King Karl XI's visit to Skuleberget in the late 17th century. Apparently, when the king was here he wanted to walk up to the cave but chickened out before he got there. The cave itself is not that much to see but the view is sensational and the path up to it will give you a good workout. There are two ways to access the cave, either from the bottom by following the blue trail, or by taking the lift on the other side of the mountain and then walking down. From the bottom, it takes about 30 minutes and from the top a little less. It is not an easy walk, although steps and railings have been added, so bring a good pair of walking shoes. To get to the lift, take the exit just south of the Skuleberget exit and drive about two minutes.

Räckebergskyrkan near Gideå is the longest tunnel cave in Sweden and can be reached by hiking the **Arnäsleden trail** (see *Hiking*, page 239). In Gideå you will also find **Skallbergsgrottorna**, which is the biggest cave in the area and one of the deepest you will find in this part of the world. Other caves to visit are **Mjältögrottan**, on Mjältö, which is the highest island in Sweden, and **Tärnättgrottan** in Skuleskogen National Park.

THE LEGEND BEHIND KUNGSGROTTAN

Robbers most likely lived in these woods 500 years ago and Kungsgrottan was one of their hiding places. It was a carefully chosen location – all merchants traveling north/south had to pass through here unless they wanted to take a wide detour. From their cave, the robbers could see everyone and would signal to their friends on the ground when the next victims were coming. When the famous Swedish botanist Carl von Linné visited this place in 1732, the robbers threw rocks at him from their cave as he made his way up the mountain.

According to another story, a farmer tried to trick the robbers by telling them that he wanted to help them catch some sheep. The sheep were on an island, the farmer told them and, when they arrived, the farmer waited in the boat, then sailed away, leaving the robbers on the island. He then came back with his farmer friends and killed the robbers. When the farmers returned to the mainland, they went to the cave to retrieve what the robbers had stolen. To their surprise, they never found anything since the robbers' maid had hidden all the merchandise in a different cave. As far as we know, the treasure has not been found to this day.

❖ On Water

Boat Trips to the Islands

Taking a boat is a pleasant way of discovering what the area has to offer. Some of the more popular boat rides are the ones to Ulvön and Trysunda. Boats depart from Örnsköldsvik, Köpmanholmen, Docksta, Mjällomslandet and Ullånger. You can also take a ride on the beautiful Ångermanälven River, where the famous High Coast Bridge is located.

Canoeing

The archipelago is great for canoeing with its many islands, bays and sounds. **Nordingrå** is a good starting point and **Lappudden Stugby and Friluftsgård** has canoes for rent.

Själevad, just seven km (4.2 miles) from Örnsköldsvik, is popular for outdoor activities and canoeing in particular. It is easy to find, just south of the city off the E4 Highway. **Kanotcentralen** in Själevad rents canoes and can be contacted at ☎ 0660-293320 or 070-6975153.

Nätraån River has peaceful and calm waters. **Djupsjö Camping** is 40 km (24 miles) west of Örnsköldsvik along the Nätraån. ☎ 0661-80056.

Boat Trip in Ådalen

Ådalen is the name of the Ångermanälven River Valley, which includes the city of Kramfors and the High Coast Bridge. It is also the name of a sightseeing boat, **M/S *Ådalen III***, from which you can enjoy a four-hour tour starting at either Härnösand or Sandslån. For bookings, ☎ 0612-50589 or 070-6605292.

The word Ådalen will forever be associated with a disastrous event in 1931. Strikes had taken place in the working class communities several times before but this particular one, on May 14, 1931, would end in a disaster. Times were tough and unemployment high so thousands of workers went on a strike and started demonstrating for higher wages. The military was brought in to control the crowds but the situation got out of control and five people were shot to death in the turmoil. There's a memorial in Lunde as a reminder of this incident.

Diving

The sea by the High Coast is deep, even close to shore, which makes for great diving. There are hundreds of shipwrecks by the shore in the area and two places that are fun to explore are **Revhällan** in Bergsjöfjärden and the bay **Maja Björnviken** at the island of **Trysunda**.

Diving gear rentals: Norrlandskustens Dyk & Sportcenter, Krokvägen 30, Örnsköldsvik, ☎ 0660-10222.

Remember: If you plan to go scuba diving and search for shipwrecks, a certificate is needed. If you don't have one, you'll need to snorkel instead, but that's rewarding as well.

While the deep water is ideal for diving, it is also much colder than places with shallow water. A wetsuit is recommended even for the summer months.

Places to Stay

Hotel Höga Kusten, The High Coast Bridge, ☎ 0613-722270, www.hotellhoga-kusten.se, $$$. At this hotel, location is the main attraction, since it's right next to the High Coast Bridge where every room has views of the bridge and the river. But the 28 rooms and restaurant also have high standards.

First Hotel Statt, Lasarettsgatan 2, Örnsköldsvik, ☎ 0660-265590, $$$. In downtown Örnsköldsvik, this hotel has everything you would expect to find in a well run four-star hotel.

Park Hotel, Örnsköldsgatan 7, Örnsköldsvik, ☎ 0660-10360, $$. $$. Small and cozy hotel in the downtown area of Örnsköldsvik near the Paradisbadet pools. It has surprisingly high comfort and quality, considering the price of the rooms and central location of the hotel.

Ulvö Rum & Konferens, Ulvöhamn, ☎ 0660-224076, $$. On the harbor at Ulvö island. Look under Ulvön, pages 234-35, for travel details on how to get to the island. This B&B has 14 rooms with community kitchen and bathrooms and there is a restaurant in the house as well. Guests have access to a sauna and solarium.

Gullviks Camping, Gullviks Havsbad, Domsjö, ☎ 0660-74582, $. Campsite by the sea in a tranquil

HOTEL PRICES SWEDEN	
For double room including taxes. For hostels with no double rooms, price is per bed in dormitory.	
$	Under 300 kr ($39)
$$	300-600 kr ($39-$78)
$$$	601-1,200 kr ($40-$156)
$$$$	Over 1,200 kr ($156+)

area with cabins to rent, 14 km (8.4 miles) southeast of Örnsköldsvik.

Högbonden Hostel, Högbonden, ☎ 0613-23100 or 0613-23005, $. The old lighthouse on this island just off the coast has been made into a hostel with a café. In the old days, the lighthouse-keeper lived here but when electricity was introduced, the island was deserted. The whole island is now a nature reserve and the hostel has been around since 1988. Take the boat leaving daily during high season from Barsta at 9:30 am and from Bönhamn at 10 am, then return in the afternoon the following day.

Places to Eat

Fina Fisken, The Harbor, Örnsköldsvik, ☎ 0660-15005, $$$. Good seafood restaurant by the harbor with views from an open-air seating area.

RESTAURANT PRICES SWEDEN	
For one main course & a beverage, including taxes.	
$	Less than 75 kr ($10)
$$	75-150 kr ($10-$20)
$$$	151-200 kr ($21-$25)
$$$$	Over 200 kr ($25+)

Café Måsen, Ulvöhamn, Ulvön, ☎ 070-5924492, $$. Don't miss the opportunity to visit Café Måsen. As with any other café, they serve sandwiches and beverages, but the real reason you should come here is to eat Ulvön's famous fermented herring (surströmming). Ruben Madsen, who runs Måsen, is actually a professional clown (!), but more importantly he is also an expert in the surströmming business. Through research and experimenting, Ruben has come up with his own technique of how to bring out the ultimate taste and aroma and he is actively marketing the surströmming tradition both nationally and internationally. Inside, there is also a little surströmming "museum" to your right as you enter the café.

Pizzeria Il Padrino, Läroverksgatan 14, Örnsköldsvik, ☎ 0660-211293, $. Örnsköldsvik has a lot of good pizza restaurants to choose from. Il Padrino is one.

Dockstabaren, by the north exit in Dockta just south of Skuleberget, $. They serve generous portions of typical Swed-

ish food (husmanskost). They can also offer accommodations at a nearby house in Docksta for reasonable prices.

Västerbotten

Introduction

When people in Sweden hear the name Västerbotten, many probably think about the cheese named for this province. Historically, it was here that gold was discovered in the 1920s, which led to a gold rush reminiscent of the one in the Klondike. Here also several major battles took place between Sweden and Russia in the 18th century, which eventually led to Sweden losing Finland to the Russians.

Umeå

Founded in 1622 by King Gustav II Adolf, Umeå is today the biggest city in the northern half of Sweden, with almost 110,000 people. The name comes from the word Uma, which means "roaring," and that is what the river Umeälven did in those days. Umeå has a young population, thanks to its university, and the city is set beautifully by the Umeälven River.

Like most cities on the Bothnian Coast, Umeå has suffered from devastating fires. One was the result of the Russians who invaded Umeå in the early 18th century and burned most of the city down. Another occurred in the late 19th century, though this one started by accident in a brewery. To prevent possible future fires from spreading, city planners created wider streets and planted birch trees all over the city, which supposedly would stop sparks from reaching the houses in a future fire. Apart from its practical function, the birches also added to the aesthetics of the city and Umeå became widely known in Sweden as "the city of birches." There are about 3,000 birches here.

Vindeln

The Vindeln district, with the roaring Vindelälven River, is 55 km (33 miles) northwest of Umeå and is a perfect place for outdoor adventures. The Vindelälven River is unique in Sweden with its numerous large rapids. Over the years, politicians have tried to take advantage of the strong rapids for

generating power. But opposition from people from all over the country has simply been too strong, so the river has been left alone. Vindelälven River is long, starting in Lappland near the Norwegian border and ending in Umeälven near the Bothnian Coast, for a total length of 450 km (280 miles). The strong rapids make Vindelälven ideal for adventures on water, but it's also a great place for sightseeing thanks to the vegetation and an active animal life along the river.

Skellefteå

Skellefteå is a picturesque mid-sized city by the Skellefteälven River. The city has benefited from the mining industry in the Boliden area west of the city, also known as Gold Country. Downtown Skellefteå is worth exploring. The old part of town, **Bonnstan** (literally farmer's town) has a lot of history. Here, you will find Sweden's oldest wooden bridge still in use, built in 1737. A great battle was fought here against the Russians in the early 19th century. Bonnstan is also known as Kyrkstan (church town) and dates back to the 17th century when church attendance was mandatory in Sweden. Many people, farmers mainly, had to travel great distances to get to the nearest church. For those who came to Skellefteå and needed to spend the night, the city had houses to accommodate them. The biggest and best-preserved church town in Sweden is **Gammelstad**, outside Luleå, which you can read more about in the Norrbotten chapter, page 258.

Cheese Country

When you drive between Umeå and Skellefteå on the E4 Highway, you will see two giant cheese slicers by the side of the road. The slicers, seven m (21 feet) high and probably the biggest in the world, represent Ostriket (the Cheese Country). For those of you who have never seen a cheese slicer, even in normal size, it's a tool used for slicing hard cheese, found in basically every Swedish household. Västerbotten is famous for its cheese, simply called Västerbotten Cheese. The taste alone deserves praise but the story behind it only adds to its legacy. It all started one day in

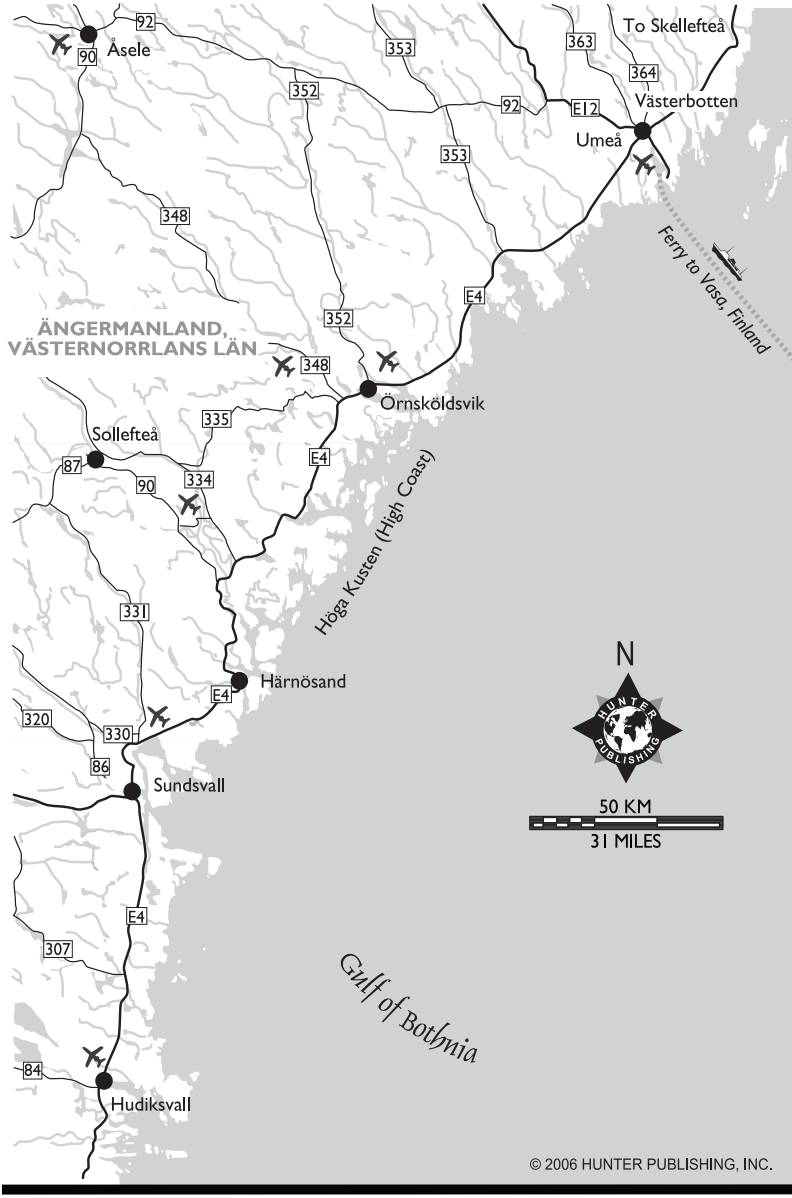
the 1870s when cheese maker Eleonora Lindström forgot to supervise her cheese and let it spoil. Luckily, instead of throwing it away, she left it in a storage room for several months until someone decided to taste it. Surprisingly, it tasted really good and a new cheese had been invented. If you get a chance, stop by and pay Ostens Hus in Burträsk a visit. Unless you are a really big cheese fan, it shouldn't be at the top of your list, but it's an interesting and unusual experience where you can find out if the cheese here is as good as they say.

Gold Country

In the 1920s, the area around Boliden west of Skellefteå became known as the Gold Country. Mining started in 1926 but the first gold had been discovered two years earlier. Originally, the search was for all kinds of metals, and both copper and silver were discovered, along with other valuable metals. But it was the gold that naturally created the most attention and it didn't take long for a gold rush to kick in. Boliden became the Swedish Klondike and created a major upswing in the economy, not only for the local area but for the entire country. It couldn't have come at a better time. The Great Depression was raging in the US and it affected the European market as well. As a result, people flocked from all over Sweden to take advantage of this opportunity and the population in the province of Västerbotten doubled in the next 15 years. Eventually, the gold mine in Boliden became the largest and richest one in Europe. Between 1926 and 1967, 125 tons of gold were produced in Boliden, half of the total output in Sweden.

Although mining ended in 1967, the Boliden area draws many visitors today thanks to the attractions that have been developed around the old mines, such as the cableway and the underground church. By visiting the **Bergrum Boliden Museum**, you can find out everything about mining and this is a good place to start your adventures. In the underground cavity here you can experience what a real earthquake, at 5.5 on the Richter scale, feels like.

Hudiksvall to Umeå



❖ Adventures in Gold Country

The Cableway

During the Second World War, a cableway was built to transport ore from the mine in Kristineberg to Boliden, a distance of nearly 100 km (60 miles). Building a railroad would have been too expensive and there was a significant shortage of trucks in those days, so a cableway seemed like the best solution. Another advantage was that it could be built in a straight line, more or less. In April of 1943, the longest cableway in the world was inaugurated and would transport ore between Kristineberg and Boliden for the next four decades.

In the mid-1980s, it was decided that trucks would be much more cost-efficient and the last cable shipment was made in January of 1987. Fortunately this did not mean the end of the cableway as two years later, the stretch between Örträsk and Mensträsk opened to the public; the baskets had been replaced with cabins and ore was replaced with people. The section between Örträsk and Mensträsk is 13 km (eight miles) long and you can start at either end. A bus will take you back to your starting point after the ride. The trip takes almost two hours so it's a good idea to bring lunch. Food can also be purchased at the starting point. The roast reindeer with potato salad is highly recommended. To get to the cableway from Skellefteå, take Road 95 going west, then Road 370 at Boliden toward Kristineberg. Next, follow signs for either Örträsk or Mensträsk (Road 365) just north of Norsjö. The ride costs 240 kr/$25 (100 kr for children), ☎ 0918-21025.

The Underground Church

Mining in Kristineberg started in the mid-1930s. One day in 1946, an extraordinary discovery was made by the workers when they found a portrayal of Jesus Christ on the wall over 100 m (300 feet) below ground level. The three-m (10-foot) Jesus figure in white and silver raised a lot of eyebrows; unfortunately it vanished just a few months later after blasts filled up the shaft. Today, you can view a reconstruction of the portrayal in the underground church not far from where the discovery was made. The church, Saint Anna, is named after the patron saint of the miners. The underground church is

open during the summer with guided tours that cost 125 kr/$13. There is also a museum and a café next to the museum. ☎ 0953-20454.

Svansele

Svansele, in the middle of Gold Country, about 70 km (42 miles) west of Skellefteå, is a real adventure center open all year. A carpenter named Thorbjörn Holmlund is the creator of Svansele. He started small, but promised his guests to expand every year. As a result, the resort has increased tremendously in popularity and in 2004, an estimated 25,000 people visited. Activities in the winter include elk safaris with snow-mobiles and ice fishing, while the summers offer canoeing, fishing and four-wheeled motorcycles, among other things. Winter is the busiest time of year and the elk safaris in particular are popular, thanks to the money-back-if-you-don't-see-an-elk guarantee. Call **Svansele Vildmarkcenter**, ☎ 0915-21010, www.svansele.se.

Adventures on the Bothnian Coast

❖ On Foot

The Elk House

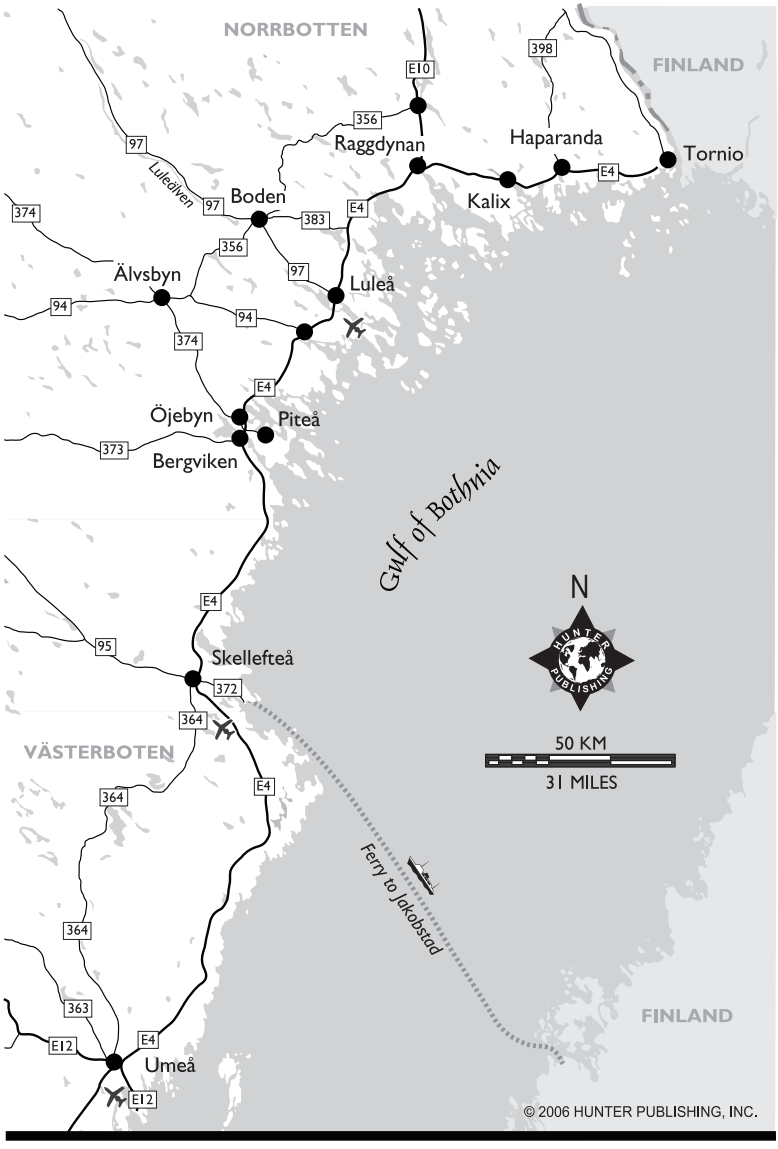
About a 45-minute drive west of Umeå, in Bjurholm, is an opportunity to watch the "kings of the forest" up close in the Elk House (Älgens Hus). The elks here are domesticated and friendly, so you are allowed to pet them. There is also a museum adjacent to the farm where you can find out all kinds of interesting things about these impressive animals. Weather permitting, safaris are offered if you want to see elks in the wild.

The Elk House is open daily in the summer season and admission is 90 kr/$9.60 (45 kr for children). During the rest of the year, advance bookings are necessary, ☎ 0932-50000.

Hiking

Isälvsleden is a 60-km (36-mile) walking trail between Vindeln and Åmsele with unique natural surroundings formed by the last Ice Age. If you plan to stay out for more than one day, there are plenty of wind shelters along the way.

Skellefteå to Haparanda



Mårdseleforsarna is a nature reserve right on Road 363 between Åmsele and Ruskele in the Vindeln district. This area includes about 40 islands and some of the best scenery you will find anywhere in the country. Some of the islands are connected by suspension bridges leading you over the roaring rapids of Vindelälven.

❖ On Wheels

Biking

The **Umeleden Trail** is great for both hiking and biking. You can start in downtown Umeå and follow the Umeälv River inland until you reach Sörfors, where you can cross the river and head back toward town. The total length of the trail is 30 km (18 miles) and there is more than just natural scenery to see. After about five km (three miles) you will get to **Umedalen Skulptur**, a sculpture park that is supposedly one of the biggest in Europe. Just before you reach the turning point by Sörfors and the bridge leading across the river, you have the option of taking a detour by walking straight ahead and crossing the river a little farther up. By doing so you will also encounter two more sights. This area, known as Norrfors, was a popular place to fish salmon several thousand years ago as it was the last rapid in the river before the Baltic Sea. The fishermen would make rock carvings and hundreds of these carvings, over 5,000 years old, can still be seen today. You cross the river here on Laxtrappa (salmon stairs), where an estimated 6,000 salmon swim every summer. Once on the other side, just keep following the trail along the river, which takes you right back to where you started in downtown Umeå.

❖ On Water

Fishing

Fishing in **Vindelälven River** is popular all year-round. Grayling and salmon trout are frequently caught but even salmon are quite common here. The best time for fishing is after midsummer and the best months are generally July and

August. Good salmon waters are found in the two rapids called **Renforsen** and **Degerforsen**. The winter season for fishing is usually from February to May. Fishing permits are available at several places along Road 363. Look for signs that say "fiskekortsförsäljning." You can also buy permits at most gas stations.

Rafting

The "untouched" national river Vindelälven is one of the best places in Sweden for whitewater rafting with sensational rapids. The level of difficulty goes all the way up to 5+ on the international scale for rafting but there are easier sections for the beginners as well.

Wilderness Adventure Vindeln, ☎ 0933-20273 or 070-3602084, is in the community of Vindeln about 55 km (33 miles) from Umeå. Prices from 395 kr/$42.

Aurora Borealis Adventures, ☎ 0933-63015, is 40 km (24 miles) west of Vindeln and 95 km (57 miles) from Umeå.

Jet Boat

This is a different way of river rafting, upstream, and powered by an engine. **Vindelälven Jetboats** was the first company in Europe to organize this adventure. The season is normally the same as whitewater rafting, which is May-October. The tours start at Vännäsby, just a 20-minute drive west of Umeå on Road E12. More information and bookings, ☎ 070-3122213.

Canoeing

In the Umeå region, the **rivers Öreälven, Umeälven** and parts of **Vindelälven** are well suited for canoeing, as is **Skellefteälven** in the Skellefteå area. While Vindelälven has untamed waters and is best suited for experienced paddlers, Umeälven has calm easy waters for pleasant trips. Rent canoes at **Öreälven Canoe Center**, ☎ 0932-10515.

Places to Stay & Eat

❖ Skellefteå Region

Hotell Källan, Åmliden, Norsjö, ☎ 0918-32100, www.kallan-hotell.se, $$$. Hotel and spa in Åmliden near the "Gold Country" with great views of mountains and lakes. Källan is also known for its restaurant with traditional "husmanskost," typical Swedish home-cooked meals.

Malå Hotell, Backgatan 34 93070 Malå, ☎ 0953-10700, www.malahotell.se, $$$. The area around Malå, in what is known as Gold Country, has seen a boom in tourism over the last decades, so much so that the hotel expanded to 48 rooms. There are also 15 cabins nearby run by the hotel.

Burträsk Värdshus, Kammvägen 7, Burträsk, ☎ 0914-10600, $$. An inn 15-minutes drive south of Skellefteå in an area rich with lakes. The restaurant serves traditional northern dishes.

❖ Umeå Region

Hotel Vindelälven, Solviksvägen 10, Vindeln, ☎ 0933-39700, $$$. A very modern hotel 55 km (33 miles) inland from downtown Umeå along the river Vindelälven. The hotel has single rooms, double rooms and one suite. The restaurant serves excellent food and you'll also find a nature room at the hotel where you can learn all about the flora and fauna before heading out on your adventures.

Rex Bar & Grill, Rådhustorget, Umeå, ☎ 090-126050, $$$. Top restaurant in the old City Hall, a beautiful stone building by the main square.

Restaurant Ackjan, Strömpilsplatsen 38, Umeå, ☎ 090-701415, $$. Sami restaurant that offers something different both in taste and atmosphere. If you've never tried reindeer meat, this is a good place to do it.

Tegs Hotel, Verkstadsgatan 5, Umeå, ☎ 090-122700, $$. Cozy, clean and comfortable little hotel in central Umeå, within walking distance of the shopping areas.

Norrbotten

Introduction

Norrbotten is the name of a province and of a county. The county covers both the province of Norrbotten and the northern half of the province of Lappland. This is by far the biggest county in Sweden, covering 25% of the total area of the country. The province surrounds the Bothnian Coast and is significantly smaller than the county. The two biggest cities here are Luleå and Piteå.

> **Did You Know?** You should have noticed by now that the four main cities in the two northern provinces on the Bothnian Coast end in the letter å (Luleå, Piteå, Skellefteå and Umeå). Å, which also is the Swedish word for creek, is pronounced like the o in the English word more. However, in the dialects spoken in northern Sweden, if a word ends in a vowel, that vowel is often silent. Hence, the names Luleå and Piteå are pronounced Lule and Pite.

Piteå

Piteå is a fairly small city of some 40,000 people, yet well-known throughout Sweden for two things, the beach and a dish known as palt. The famous beach resort, **Pite Havsbad**, is particularly popular with Norwegians. The people of northern Norway have to travel far south in their own country to find beaches like the ones in Piteå. But it is no surprise that people, regardless of nationality, enjoy coming to Piteå in the summer. The city center has a lot to offer for a small town, with plenty of shops and cafés to accommodate all the tourists in the summer. Piteå was actually the first city in the country to have a pedestrian street, established in 1961.

Piteå Tourist Office, the Bus Station, Piteå, ☎ 0911-93390, www.pitea.se.

Pite Havsbad

A foreigner might be surprised to find one of the best beaches in Sweden here in the northernmost region, but Pite Havsbad, sometimes referred to as the "Nordic Riviera," has earned its reputation. What started in the 1940s with a small kiosk has evolved into one of the biggest and most popular resorts along the east coast. Pite Havsbad has a five-km (three-mile) beach with shallow water making it ideal for families with children. The water is also warmer here than at most other beaches in Sweden, partly because of the many hours of sunshine warming it up, but also because it's in a bay. Pite Havsbad often records the highest water temperatures in the country.

Luleå

Luleå is the largest city in Norrbotten, with 67,000 people, and it was the natural meeting place in Norrbotten County for centuries. The city was originally a little farther inland, where Gammelstad (Old Town) is today. Luleå was officially declared a city in 1621 by King Gustav II Adolf, but just a few decades later a decision was made to build a new city closer to shore. The land rise, which started after the last Ice Age, had made it impossible to sail to Gammelstad. The downtown area of today's Luleå has a gridline pattern and has a beautiful location on a little peninsula, practically surrounded by water. The problem in the winter with such a location and the gridline pattern is that it leaves the city exposed to the strong cold winds coming in from the sea.

Luleå has always been, and still is, important for its infrastructure. The harbor is used frequently by the many industries in the area and the airport is one of the busiest in Sweden. The train station in Luleå has connections with Kiruna, via Boden, and continues to Narvik in Norway. The Luleå Archipelago, practically shared with nearby Piteå, is popular with both locals and visitors in the summer.

Luleå Tourist Office, Storgatan 43b, Luleå, ☎ 0920-293500, www.lulea.se.

Boden

If you are not driving up the coast and instead take the train, you will travel a bit inland and get to Älvsbyn and Boden before you can get to Piteå and Luleå. Boden is known as a military town and it is no coincidence that the Stambanan and Malmbanan railways meet here. The city's big landmark is the **Boden Fortress**, built in the early 20th century to protect the valuable iron ore transported from the mines in Kiruna to the harbor in Luleå. Guided tours are offered here and the knowledgeable guides are or have been employees in the military. Many of them served here in Boden and will reveal some really interesting "secrets" about the once-heavily guarded fortress.

Boden Tourist Office, Kungsgatan 40, Boden, ☎ 0921-62410.

Sightseeing

❖ Gammelstad

Gammelstad Kyrkstad (the old church town), 10 km (six miles) from downtown Luleå, is the largest and best-preserved church town in Sweden with over 400 cottages. In the 14th century when the town was built, it was the big center of commerce in the region and the natural meeting place for everyone. In those days, the fastest form of transportation was a horse and many people couldn't make it to church and back on the same day, especially in northern Norrland where the counties are large. Since the church played an important role in people's lives back then, cottages were built for those who needed a place to spend the night.

Gammelstad is today a popular place to visit and has been on the UNESCO World Heritage list since 1996. People still live in many of the houses but there are also several that are open to the public. Gammelstad has its own tourist office, offering guided tours in the summer. The tour takes about 45 minutes but there is also an open-air museum in the area worth visiting so you should allow for at least a half-day here. Buses from downtown Luleå to Gammelstad leave every hour.

Gammelstad Tourist Office, Kyrktorget 1, Gammelstad, ☎ 0920-293581.

Tip: If you don't get a chance to stop by Luleå, then **Öjebyn**, the church town outside Piteå, is also worth visiting.

❖ Luleå Archipelago

One of the main attractions in the area is the archipelago. The archipelago in Norrbotten has over 700 islands, stretches from the Västerbotten border to the Finnish border and is the only brackish water archipelago in the world. Brackish, of course, means that it is neither salty nor fresh since the seawater is mixed with water from the rivers running out into the Bothnian Sea. Luleå is only 100 km (60 miles) south of the Arctic Circle, which means bright summer nights. The ideal time for a visit is June-August. The islands closer to shore have lots of trees, while the ones in the outer parts are more barren. Hiking, sailing, kayaking and fishing are popular summer activities in the islands, but they are worth visiting even in the winter when you can drive snowmobiles from one island to another.

One of the most popular islands in the Luleå Archipelago is **Kluntarna** and if you visit only one island, this is the best choice. Kluntarna has everything, from nature to historic sights. Some of the interesting things you will find are the **labyrinths**, probably created in the 14th century when the area was first colonized. To get to Kluntarna, take M/S *Ronja* from the Luleå Harbor.

Other Places Worth Visiting

- **Klubbvikens Havsbad**, not far from Luleå, has a nice restaurant and cabins to rent overnight.
- **Junkön** has an interesting archipelago museum.
- **Hindersön** is the island with the most residents.

❖ Älvsbyn & the Pite Älv River

Storforsen (the Great Rapid), in the river Pite Älv, shares its name with many other rapids in Sweden, but this one is the biggest and most famous. It's five km (three miles) long and has a total drop of 82 m (240 feet), making it the longest waterfall in Sweden and one of the longest in Europe.

Storforsen is an impressive sight, and more than 150,000 people every year will agree. The true wilderness here, with mountains, forests and lakes, makes a visit worthwhile even without the waterfall. For those traveling to Piteå by train, the nearest stop is at Älvsbyn, which is near Storforsen. Älvsbyn is a great place for outdoor activities and the wilderness is right around the corner. Polarbageriet, one of the biggest producers of bread in Sweden, is headquartered here in Älvsbyn.

Älvsbyn Tourist Office, Storgatan 6, Älvsbyn, ☎ 0929-17400, www.alvsbyn.se.

Adventures

❖ On Water

Kayaking

Rent your kayak at **Jopikgården** on **Hindersön**, one of the biggest islands in the Luleå Archipelago. Jopikgården also offers accommodation and food. This is a great place to stay in the archipelago if you want the full experience with good food and adventures nearby. ☎ 0920-60012.

❖ On Foot

Hiking

There is a trail called **Skärgårdsleden** which starts at the Kallax Airport and takes you out to and around the islands. You have to plan your hike, as the trail is not marked everywhere and requires a map, which can be bought at the tourist office in Luleå for 60 kr/$6.50. To get from one island to another, you can sometimes borrow a rowboat for the short distances. Other passages require transportation by boat, which needs to be pre-booked. A visit to the tourist office is recommended for help with booking boats and, if needed, accommodation on the islands. And don't forget to buy the map.

If you want to go hiking on **Kluntarna**, try the trail called **Naturstigen**. There are two options to choose from; the shorter takes one hour and the longer about two. A map of this trail can also be bought at the tourist office in town or on the island.

■ Lappland

Introduction

Lappland is the biggest and northernmost province of Sweden. Though it's the size of England, Lappland has a population of only 106,000 people. It is famous for its Sami people and visitors come from all over the world to watch the midnight sun in the summer and the northern lights in the winter. What Lappland lacks in urbanization it makes up for with some of the best outdoor activities in the country. The eastern part is made up of forests, rivers and lakes, while the western section is high country, including the highest mountain in Sweden, **Kebnekaise**, 2,111 m (6,300 feet) above sea level. **Kiruna** is the biggest city in the province, with around 20,000 people and is one of the largest in the world in terms of area. The county of Kiruna covers a large part of the northern section of Lappland. Whether or not Kiruna actually is the biggest city in the world can be argued, but the city can certainly boast the biggest underground iron ore mine in the world.

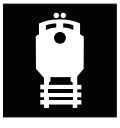
Getting Here & Getting Around

Tip: Keep in mind that bad weather in the winter can close the roads and delay traffic for cars and buses in Lappland. Train traffic, however, is generally not affected by the weather.

By Plane

Lappland is a remote place and getting there by plane is recommended if you're in a hurry. Flights from Stockholm Arlanda airport are available two to three times daily year-round with **SAS** (www.sas.se) and they take about 90 minutes to Kiruna. Planes and helicopters are also used frequently as transportation to places for skiing, hiking or just sightseeing.

By Train



Getting here by train can be an adventure. Connections are available from Luleå and Narvik with **Malmbanan** line. You can also take the famous **Inlandsbanan** which goes all the way

from Kristinehamn by Lake Vänern in the south to Gällivare in northern Lappland. To obtain timetables for these train lines visit www.connex.se.

❖ Malmbanan

Malmbanan consists of 484 km (290 miles) of tracks on the Swedish side and 43 km (26 miles) in Norway. This route between Luleå and Narvik was built over 100 years ago for the purpose of transporting iron ore from the mine. Because of the geological conditions and tough winter climate in this region, constructing it was a long and grueling process. An estimated 6,600 people worked on the railroad, which took almost five years to complete. Narvik was a necessary complement to the Swedish port of Luleå, primarily because it's free from ice all year, thanks to the Gulf Stream. Traveling on Malmbanan is much more than just transportation; it's a real sightseeing trip with lots of tunnels, bridges and spectacular views of the exciting landscape.

Note: The trains operated by the mining company LKAB are prioritized on Malmbanan and always have the right of way over public transportation.

❖ Inlandsbanan

The first stretch was Östersund-Ulriksfors, built in 1907, and slowly but steadily new links were added. So, 30 years later, Inlandsbanan was finally inaugurated. The whole route from Kristinehamn to Gällivare not only took a long time to build, but it cost 136 million kr/$1.4 million.

Inlandsbanan is a great way of combining transportation and sightseeing. The train stops at various places where travelers are allowed (and encouraged) to walk out and look at the scenery, plant life and animal life. You can get on or off at any of the stations along the way, but bear in mind that you are often out in the middle of nowhere. Also keep in mind that Inlandsbanan is not for those in a hurry. The trip from Östersund to Gällivare, for example, takes 14 hours, including all the stops, and there are plenty of them, lasting from five to 30 minutes. Often, the train also has to stop due to reindeers on the tracks.

By Bus

Buses are available between smaller communities in Lappland as an alternative to trains. You can also take the bus instead of the train from Luleå or Narvik. The bus takes a bit longer but it's cheaper too. For available routes and prices, ☎ 020-470047, www.ltnbd.se.

By Car

Having a car is definitely an advantage while you are in Lappland. By car, you can reach many destinations where public transportation won't take you.

Rental Companies in Kiruna:

- **Avis**, ☎ 0980-130 80
- **Europcar**, ☎ 0980-807 59
- **Hertz**, ☎ 0980-190 00
- **Kiruna Biluthyrning**, ☎ 0980-192 99

Plant & Animal Life

Lappland has rich and diverse flora and fauna, especially considering how far north it is. Elk, fox, reindeer and hares are some of the more common mammals and even the big predators can be seen, though wolves are rare. The bird life is impressive in this region as well. There are 400 types of birds in Sweden and about half of them have been spotted here. Some of the typical birds here are grouse, peregrine and other falcons, sea eagles and golden eagles. The best time of year to spot wild animals is naturally in the summer since many hibernate in the winter. Some remain awake in winter, such as the fox, hare and grouse, but they can be hard to spot since they change to a white "outfit."

Cloudberries

The cloudberry looks like a small golden blackberry and is a real delicacy. They grow primarily in the cold northern climates of Scandinavia, Canada and Siberia. In the fall, the berries ripen and turn into a bright yellow, almost orange,

color. Cloudberries are popular especially for making jam, jelly and juice and are commercially important in Lappland.

Mosquitoes

The most dreaded animal in the north of Sweden is not one of the big predators; it's one of the smallest animals in the forest. There are more than 50 different kinds of mosquitoes in Sweden. They lay their eggs in the soil before winter. The eggs hatch once the temperatures start rising in the spring. It is only the female that bites and she can lay over 200 eggs at a time, six times per summer. If you plan to spend time outdoors in this part of Sweden during the summer, you should definitely buy some repellent before heading out. You'll find it at any pharmacy or camping shop. If you are extremely sensitive to mosquito bites, there is an even more effective way to avoid getting bitten: Visit in the winter.

Climate

The winters in this part of the country are cold and dark, though not as cold as you may think. The average temperature in Kiruna for the year is only 14°F lower than it is in the southern regions of the country. The winters can be brutally cold, however, and some regions are covered with snow for as much as 240 days in a year. The summers can be quite pleasant; it usually doesn't get too hot and the average temperature in Kiruna in July is only 54°F. But in Lappland, there are significantly bigger temperature changes, depending on where in the province you are. Generally the temperature changes by .9 to 1.8°F for every 100 m/320 feet of elevation. There can be huge differences in temperatures between mountains and valleys. Another factor is the wind, which is always much stronger at the peaks.

Even though the sun doesn't set for about two months in the summer, the hours of sunlight are significantly shorter than in the coastal region. Luleå has about 275 hours of sunlight in June, while Kiruna has only 185. Lappland also naturally has a lot more precipitation, especially in the mountain region. Low-pressure usually comes from the west, where the clouds hit the mountains in the border zone between Sweden and

Norway. Riksgränsen, on the border, has six times as much precipitation as Abisko which is only 35 km (21 miles) farther east, and snow sometimes covers the ground for as much as 40 days more per year in Riksgränsen compared to Abisko.

Kiruna

Kiruna is the biggest city in Sweden and one of the biggest in the world. Of course, we are talking about the area, not the population. Kiruna County is about the same size as the three southern provinces of Scania, Blekinge and Halland put together or nearly half the size of Denmark. The actual town center of Kiruna is quite small, however, with a population of about 20,000. The name Kiruna comes from the Sami word, girona, which means ptarmigan, a bird commonly found on the nearby mountain Kiirunavaara (Ptarmigan Mountain).

Kiruna has become a popular place for visitors from all over the world, year-round. There are a total of about 6,000 beds available for tourists in hotels, hostels and campsites in this small town and sometimes even those are not enough.

Kiruna Tourist Office, Lars Janssonsgatan 17, Kiruna, ☎ 0980-18880, is centrally located at the main square near the big Scandic Hotel building, about a 10-minute walk from the train station.

History of Kiruna & the Mine

Although people have lived here for several centuries, Kiruna only turned into a city for one reason – iron. The iron ore was created by a volcanic eruption thousands of years ago. Although it was discovered in the 18th century in Mount Luossavaara, it wasn't until a company named LKAB set up their business in the area that Kiruna became a real settlement. LKAB stands for Luossavaara Kiirunavaara AB. Luossavaara means Salmon Mountain in Sami. It was named after the lake in the valley below, which had lots of salmon. Kiirunavaara got its name from the large number of ptarmigans. (AB is a Swedish abbreviation for a company form where the owners are stock holders.)

LKAB has been around for over 100 years and Mount Luossavaara was completely emptied of iron ore in the 1980s. Kiirunavaara, however, still contains plenty of it and to this

day an estimated one billion tons have been produced from the LKAB mines, which also includes the mine in Malmberget near Gällivare, south of Kiruna. Kiirunavaara is the world's biggest underground iron ore mine.

The Future

Much has been written in the media about how newly discovered iron ore near the lake will affect the city. Since the city of Kiruna only exists because of the iron ore, it would most likely cease to exist should the mine shut down. In order to prevent this, there is a good chance that much of the city could be moved, which would involve tearing down the city hall and possibly the beautiful church, two of the biggest landmarks in the city. There is opposition to such actions, mainly from people whose houses will get torn down. But they can't ignore the fact that over 100,000 people in northern Sweden and Norway will lose their jobs, and that Kiruna will not survive without mining.

Sightseeing in Kiruna

The city hall may not look like much from the outside but the interior provides an art exhibition well worth visiting. Guided tours are offered in the summer. The church, downtown, was built in 1912 and is made of wood. The architecture is unique and looks like a cozy cabin rather than a "normal" church. It was voted "Most beautiful building in Sweden" in 2001. Guided tours of the city are available by **Kiruna Buss**, which also includes entry to the Ice Hotel Art Centre and the Lapp Museum in Jukkasjärvi. Prices from 450 kr/$48 per person. ☎ 0980-82900.

Jukkasjärvi

The name Jukkasjärvi means "market by the lake" and it was an important market town for the Sami over several centuries, long before iron ore was discovered in Kiruna. This little town, just 20 km (12 miles) east of Kiruna, has become world famous over the past decade thanks to the Ice Hotel. The hotel is the big reason people come here, but Jukkasjärvi is more than just the hotel and has plenty to offer year-round. Many tours and other activities start here both in the summer and winter, many of which are arranged by **Ice Hotel Adventures**, ☎ 0980-63530. More about these in the *Adventures* section.

Abisko

Abisko is between Kiruna and Narvik near the Norwegian border. The natural surroundings here are unique, with large open spaces, lakes, and snow-covered mountain. The famous **Abisko National Park** is a great place to visit and explore the environment. The little community of Abisko also has easy access from Kiruna and Narvik with both trains and buses that stop right in front of the tourist office.

Southeast of Abisko is **Lapporten**, a mountain ridge valley created during the last Ice Age. It is two km (1.2 miles) wide and runs between two mountain tops – one of the most famous sights in all of Lapland.

Kebnekaise

Kebnekaise is the name for the highest peak in Sweden but it also represents the entire surrounding area, covering over 500 square km (195 square miles). The peak is about 2,111 m (6,000 feet) though it varies since it's a glacier. The first person ever to make it to the top was a Frenchman named Charles Rabot in 1883. Most people who come here have no intention of climbing all the way to the peak but, if you do, be sure to use an experienced guide.

For more information and to book a guide, contact **Kebnekaise Fjällstation**, a cabin, which also comes with food and accommodation, ☎ 0980-55000. Other options for hiking in the region can be found under *Hiking* in *Adventures on Foot*.

Did You Know? The name Kebnekaise comes from the Sami word for kettle. However, if one looks at Kebnekaise and the surrounding mountains, it is the neighboring peak that looks more like a pot. They may have originally named that peak Kebnekaise but transferred the name to the mountain we know as Kebnekaise today.

Sightseeing

❖ The Midnight Sun

What is it? It's when the sun does not go below the horizon at any time during the night. The reason is that the earth is tilted on its axis and the area above the Arctic Circle is constantly facing the sun at the time of midsummer.

The midnight sun is best seen above the Arctic Circle but it's possible to see it farther south on clear days because of the refraction of light in the atmosphere. The farther north you are, the longer you can see it. In Kiruna, the sun doesn't set for about two months between mid-May and mid-July.

The name says midnight but that is not when the sun is at the lowest point on the sky in Kiruna. Because of the added hour enforced in daylight-saving time, the real midnight is at 1 am; however, since Kiruna is 20° east of the Greenwich meridian you need to subtract 20 minutes. As a result, the midnight sun in Kiruna can be seen at 12:40.

Best place to see it? At the top of Mount Luossavaara. From here you have the best view in Kiruna. Not only can you see the midnight sun in the north, you also have the mountains to the west, plus great views of the city below and the village of Jukkasjärvi to the east. Bus tours are offered from the tourist office for 195 kr/$21 at 8:30 pm.

The Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis)

The winters in Kiruna are dark and the sun doesn't go above the horizon for about one month but, if you're lucky, you could see the the northern lights. The northern lights start appearing in the fall in northern Sweden and are caused by charged particles from the sun and solar winds. When these particles enter the earth's magnetic field they are steered toward the north and south poles. When they interact with the atoms of the upper atmosphere, energy is released that creates the northern lights. The northern lights can appear in many different shapes and colors but are often seen as streaks in green, yellow or red that sometimes light up the whole sky. The best time to see them in Kiruna is from October to March. At Esrange, the space center, guided tours are offered from September (see the *Adventures* section in this chapter).

Adventures

On Foot

❖ Tour the Mine

The mine in Kiruna is not only the big employer in town; it is also the big tourist attraction. Seven tours are offered daily during the summer, leaving from the tourist office in a bus. The tours are offered in Swedish, English, and German and, for pre-registered groups, possibly in other languages as well. Just ask inside where you buy the tickets. The tour takes about two hours and 45 minutes and costs 195 kr/$21 (120 kr for students and 50 kr for children ages six-15; note that children under age six are not allowed to enter for safety reasons); ☎ 0980-18880

The bus takes you down on a paved road and doesn't stop until you are more than 500 m (1,500 feet) below the mountain. This is as far as visitors are allowed; the workers are twice as far down. There are more than 400 km (250 miles) of paved road and an additional 400 km of gravel road built for transportation in the mountain. The speed limit on these steep, winding roads is generally 30-50 km (20-30 miles) per hour, though the fastest recorded speed is 81 mph. (Don't worry, it was not set by the tourist bus.) The guides are knowledgeable but the tour, although worthwhile, can seem perhaps a bit too much of a promotion for LKAB.

The guide will take you through a display of machines and other tools and explain the whole process of how iron ore is extracted and transported to the harbors of Luleå in Sweden and Narvik in Norway by train. These trains are actually pulled by the strongest engines in the world. You also learn how blasting is done with a special technique. At night, the city of Kiruna can feel the ground shaking from these blasts, which are done every night, all year, at 1:30 am.

Safety is an issue taken seriously in the mine and all visitors, like the workers, are required to wear a helmet while inside – although, because of the pressure in the material, there is absolutely no risk of any part of the cave collapsing. Accidents among workers occurred much more frequently in the old

days when most work was done manually. With today's technology, most of the work is done outside the mine, controlling machines from a comfortable chair with a monitor and a control panel.

> **Tip:** Bring a warm sweater or jacket to wear inside the mine. Even if it is summer outside, the mine is kept at 40°F all year.

❖ Esrange

Space research has been done in the area since the 1940s and Esrange, the Scandinavian version of Cape Canaveral, has been around since the 1960s.

If you only have a day in Kiruna, visit the mine instead but, if you have more time, Esrange, 45 km (27 miles) outside of Kiruna, is well worth a visit. About 10-20 rockets are launched into space annually here at Europe's only civil space station and the best time of year to witness one of these is in the winter. If you happen to be here in the winter you should also go on the guided tour of the northern lights available from September every year.

Guided tours are offered all year, where you can find out everything about rockets, satellites, stratospheric balloons and other interesting tools used for ozone research.

Summer tours, offered June 14-August 13 at 9 am-1 pm, start at the tourist office and cost 290 kr/$31 (200 kr for students), which includes transfer to and from Esrange. For other dates, tours are available on request for a minimum of four people and cost 390 kr/$42 and 200 kr for children. ☎ 0980-18880.

❖ Visit the Sami

The Sami are the indigenous people of Sweden, Norway, Finland and northwestern Russia. Originally, they were hunters and fishermen but sometime during the 17th century they turned into nomadic people. They made their living by domesticating reindeer and moved them from pasture to pasture, depending on the season. Today, there are about 50-80,000 Sami in northern Scandinavia, Finland and Russia. The majority live in Norway and

some 20,000 in Sweden, extending all the way down to Dalarna in the south. These numbers, however, are just estimates since there has never been an official census. Nowadays, only a small minority of the Sami make a living off reindeer herding and few are still nomadic.

There is a **Sami Camp** in Jukkasjärvi open daily in the summer with guided tours five times per day. The camp is like an open-air museum where you can see what it's like to live as a Sami, with reindeer, huts, lassoing, and their local food. Tickets can be purchased at the Kiruna Tourist Office and cost 75/$8 kr for adults (35 kr for children), which includes the bus ride to Jukkasjärvi leaving at 9 am Monday-Friday from outside the office. ☎ 0980-21329, www.nutti.se.

❖ Hiking

Kungsleden

Kungsleden is without a doubt the most famous hiking trail in the country and many experienced hikers will tell you that you've never truly hiked in Sweden until you've hiked Kungsleden. It stretches all the way from Abisko in the north to Hemavan in the south. One of the more popular routes is the one leading up toward **Kebnekaise**, the highest peak in Sweden. **Nikkaluokta**, 19 km (11 miles) from Kebnekaise, is a popular place to start and can be reached by bus from Kiruna. Another option is starting in **Abisko**, where you will have to allow several days as it's 86 km (52 miles) long.

Abisko-Kebnekaise-Nikkaluokta

The cabins (fjällstuga) are recommended starting points for all hikers. Kungsleden is over 100 years old and originally there were Sami huts along the trail, which were eventually replaced by cabins in the 1960s. Cabins are all along the northern half of Kungsleden and provide food, accommodation, information and even guides, should you need one. Kungsleden is 425 km (255 miles) long but it is mainly the northern section that people visit.

The southern part of Kungsleden, past Kvikkjokk, is not as trafficked and does not have cabins for several miles. Here you are on your own and can walk for days without meeting anyone. The trails of Kungsleden are accessible and not diffi-

cult to walk – well suited even for beginners. But even the experienced will find it challenging up toward the peaks of Kebnekaise (which technically is not part of Kungsleden).

For experienced and adventurous hikers who want to venture outside the Kungsleden trail, there's **Sarek National Park** in the west. Sarek is a real wilderness area but still within a reasonable distance from Gällivare and Kiruna.

Distances Between Cabins
Abisko-Nikkaluokta

Abisko-Abiskojaure	15 km
Abiskojaure-Alesjaure	20 km
Alesjaure-Tjäktä	13 km
Tjäktä-Singi	25 km
Singi-Kebnekaise	14 km
Kebnekaise-Nikkaluokta	19 km

On Snow

❖ Skiing

The Kiruna area has 80 km (48 miles) of cross-country tracks around the city and alpine skiing on **Mount Luossavaara** with three lifts. The best alpine skiing in northern Lappland is in the area around **Riksgränsen** by the Norwegian border. There are also **Abisko** and **Björkliden** nearby.

Midnight Skiing

Riksgränsen, which literally translated means "the national border," is the northernmost ski resort in the world and offers skiing as late as the end of June. Summer skiing exists in other places in Scandinavia and Europe as well but almost exclusively on glaciers. What makes Riksgränsen unique is that there is no glacier here; it's simply so far north that summer skiing is possible anyway. The season here starts in February and ends on the midsummer weekend, which is at the end of June. Sometimes, the air temperature is warm enough to ski in shorts and short sleeves, but the most spectacular thing about skiing here during midsummer is the midnight

sun. The lifts are normally open 9 am-4 pm during the day in peak season, but every Wednesday and Friday night, between mid-May and midsummer, they open up at 10 pm and close at half past midnight.

A one-day lift pass costs 285 kr/$30 and a night pass costs 245 kr. Ski rental services are also available. There are often special offers so call or visit the website before you go to find out more. ☎ 0980-40080, www.riksgransen.nu.

RIKSGRÄNSEN DETAILS	
Drop	387 m
Longest slope	2,350 m
Number of slopes	19
Total combined length of slopes	19 km

Tip: There is a photo exhibition in a house in Riksgränsen featuring framed photos and multimedia shows on the spectacular landscapes of Lappland. They were produced by the late Sven Hörnell over several decades, both on foot and from his own airplane. The exhibition is open every day from 9 am-6 pm, February-September. Should you wish to see it at a different time, you can call to possibly arrange a visit. ☎ 0980-43111, www.sven-hornell.se.

❖ Dog Sledding

The best time to go is early spring, which provides the best surface, capable of taking you virtually anywhere.

Kiruna Sled Dog Tours, ☎ 070-5559303. Price 850 kr/$90.

Tours are conducted between Nikkaluokta and Kebnekaise with **Jukkasjärvi Vildmarksturer**, ☎ 0980-21156, www.jvt.se.

❖ Snowmobiling

The Ice Hotel offers snowmobile tours. **Ice Hotel Adventures**, ☎ 0980-63530, info@adventurelapland.com.

Artic Guide, ☎ 0980-82577. This company can also organize other activities such as hunting and fishing trips, visits to the Ice Hotel and the space station Esrange, or arrange accommodation for you.

On Ice

❖ The Ice Hotel

Imagine that you build a hotel. People work day and night for you over several weeks to get it ready in time. It becomes a huge success, but when the season ends, someone destroys it and you have to rebuild for the next season. The same thing will happen the following year and the one after that and so on. Doesn't sound tempting, does it? But this is what the creator of the Ice Hotel in Jukkasjärvi has to put up with, only he knew about it before he started and it's not being destroyed by some jealous competitor across town, but by Mother Nature.

It all started when some Japanese artists visited the area and started carving ice sculptures, which caught a lot of people's attention. A Frenchman named Jannot Derid liked the idea and started an art exhibition in an igloo in 1990. Some visitors decided to spend the night in the igloo and the idea of creating a hotel made of ice was born. Every year, 30,000 tons of snow and 4,000 tons of ice are used to construct the large building with 60 rooms. The hotel opens every year in the middle of December after about a month of construction and closes in the spring sometime in late April or early May; it all depends on the weather, of course. The hotel slowly starts

melting as the days become longer and is usually gone by mid-May.

Other things you can do at the Ice Hotel are watch a Shakespeare play at the Ice Globe Theatre or get married at the Ice Chapel.

For Summer Visitors

The **Ice Hotel Art Center** is available for summer visitors where you can look at art creations made completely from ice, or take a drink in the Absolut Ice Bar in a glass made of ice. The Art Center is open May-November and admission is 100 kr/$10.70.

❖ The Ice Globe Theatre

If you've ever been to the Globe Theatre in London you'll know where the creator of The Ice Globe Theatre got the idea. Rolf Degerlund replicated the British original and, with help from Yngve Bergqvist, President of the Ice Hotel, built a colder version of it in Jukkasjärvi. Shakespeare is the running theme, with Hamlet performed in the first year, 2003, and Macbeth the year after; the plays are offered four times a week, starting in January. The performances are understandably a little different from most Shakespeare plays. The actors have to endure a physical challenge as temperatures can be as low as 25-30° below zero C (-13 to -22°F). The language used in these plays is Sami, since it's the language of the native people here. In other words, the vast majority of spectators will not understand a single word spoken by the actors. In addition to plays, there are also operas, concerts and even movies on Sundays.

Stay Warm During the Play

The most important parts of your body to keep warm are your head and your feet. Shoes and a warm hat are vital. If you don't have any, the Ice Hotel can assist you. Contact the Ice Hotel, ☎ 0980-66800, www.icehotel.com.

❖ Climbing

For the adventurous, try ice-climbing in **Abisko Canyon**. The canyon is a famous landmark in the Abisko area and provides great scenery year-round. In the winter, get the full experience by climbing with a guide up the ice walls. The price is 350 kr/$37 per person and there is a minimum requirement of

three people. Remember to call at least one day in advance. **Abisko Tourist Station**, ☎ 0980-40200.

On Horseback

Riding Icelandic horses is a great way to explore the natural surroundings around Kiruna in the summer, whether you are a beginner or an experienced rider. Guides will be provided and you can spend the whole day or just a few hours on your trip. Prices start at around 250 kr/$27 for the shortest trips, usually a few hours. You can also go for a whole day, weekend or even week-long tours.

Islandshästar i Norr, ☎ 0980-18504, is a company just west of Kiruna on the way to Narvik that arranges tours.

On Wheels

❖ Mountain Bike

The best trail is the one called **Rallarleden** (the Navvy's Trail) which goes between Abisko and Riksgränsen. This section is where the old railroad used to go when iron ore was first transported with trains from Kiruna to Narvik in the late 19th century.

> **Navvies** were what they called the workers who built railroads in the old days.

The views here are spectacular and the trail is also well-suited for hiking. Contact **Björkliden Fjällanläggningar**, ☎ 0980-64100.

On Water

❖ By Boat

Boat trips down the beautiful Torne Älv, which include stops at Jukkasjärvi Church and the Ice Hotel Art Center, can be booked at the **Kiruna Tourist Office** and take about five hours. Price is 895 kr/$95 and includes dinner. If you don't want to spend that much time or money, there is also a shorter trip for 495 kr/$52 which takes about three hours.

❖ Whitewater Rafting

The best rafting in Sweden is in the north and on the **Kalix River**; you can combine the thrills of wild rapids with some really nice scenery. The Ice Hotel in Jukkasjärvi arranges trips daily with departures from the **Icehotel Adventure Centre**. Bookings, ☎ 0980-66800, www.icehotel.com/summer.

In the Air

Helicopter rides to remote places for angling, hunting, other adventures or just sightseeing are available through **Kallax Flyg** from four different locations. Prices are 500-700 kr/$53-75 per adult for a single fare.

Airbase Nikkaluokta and **Airbase Kiruna**, ☎ 0980-81000.

Airbase Kvikkjokk, ☎ 0971-21068.

Airbase Kurravaara, ☎ 0980-20250, www.kallaxflyg.se.

Places to Stay & Eat

The Ice Hotel, Jukkasjärvi, ☎ 0980-66800, www.icehotel.com, $$$$. (The price for a double room is 2,800 kr/$300.) The temperature inside the hotel is around 5° below freezing. Every guest who checks in gets a guided tour of the hotel where they are told about practical things, such as how to stay warm while you are sleeping. Bookings need to be made well in advance, especially on weekends.

Read more about the Ice Hotel on page 274.

Scandic Hotel Ferrum, Lars Janssonsgatan 15, 98131 Kiruna, ☎ 0980-398600, $$$-$$$$. By the main square next to the tourist office, this is the most expensive hotel in Kiruna and has great views of the mountains. Top-quality hotel with gym, solarium and saunas.

Hotel Riksgränsen, Riksgränsen, ☎ 0980-40080. The hotel is by far the biggest employer in this little ski resort by the Norwegian border.

Restaurant Lapporten, Björkliden, ☎ 0980-64100, $$. Really nice restaurant with an incredible view from a panorama window, which makes the food taste even better.

Yellow House, Hantverkaregatan 25, Kiruna. ☎ 0980-13750, $. This hostel is just a five-minute walk from downtown. Better quality than a regular hostel and you can also get your own private room, well-furnished, for 300 kr/$32. Breakfast buffet is available. Worth the price.

Kebnekaise Fjällstation, Kiruna, ☎ 0980-55000. Open during the summer season from around mid-June to mid-September. There is accommodation, a restaurant, a sauna and a shop.

Kaffekoppen, Gräfsnäsvägen 6, Kiruna. Pleasant little café. Try the "tunnbrödrulle with suovas," which is a rolled-up sandwich with reindeer meat. Tasty.

Norway

The South

■ Oslo

Introduction

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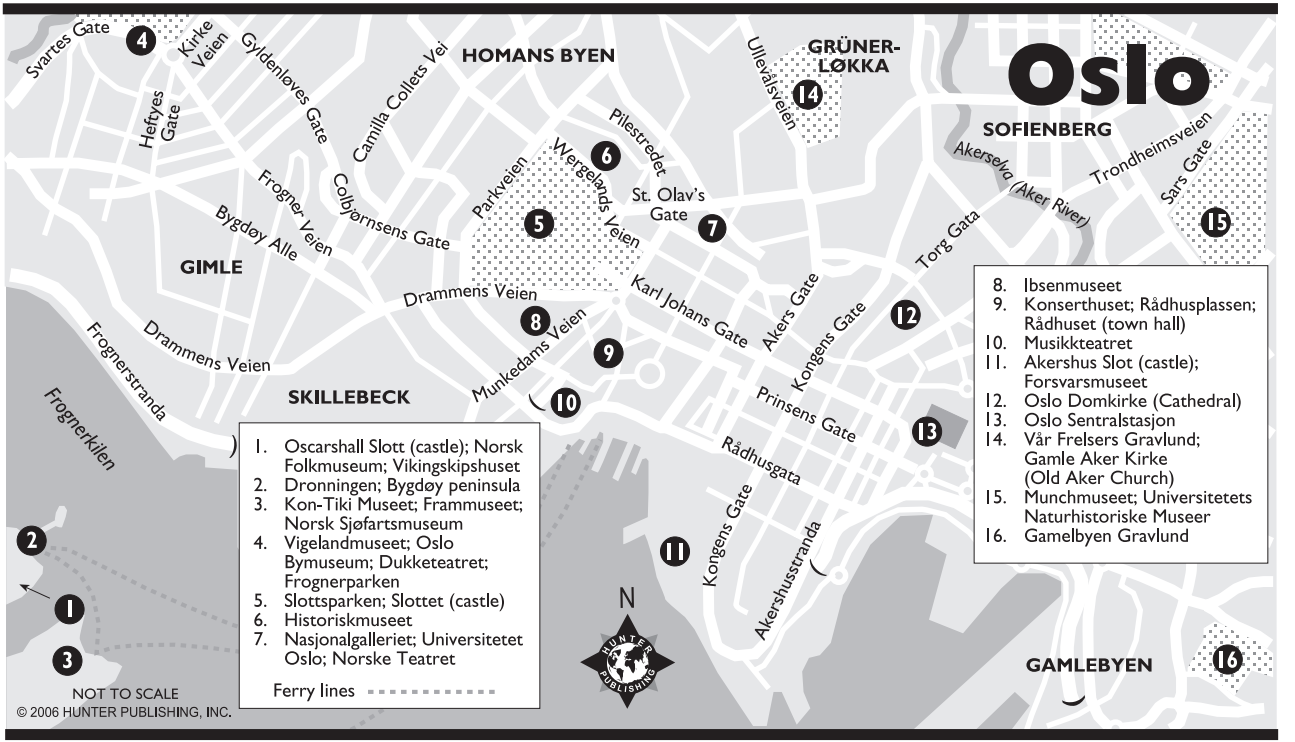
- **Trondelag** 337

On an international scale, Oslo is a pretty small capital but, with just over 500,000 people, it's Norway's biggest city by far. More than 10% of the country's total population lives here; if we count people in the entire Oslofjord area in the summertime, it amounts to one third of Norway's population.

One of the biggest capitals in the world by area, what makes Oslo unique is not its size but rather its location. The Oslofjord links the city with the sea to the south. In the other three directions you find mountains, lakes and forests within easy reach from the city center in an area called Marka, which makes up 75% of the city's total area. This means that wherever you are in Oslo you have natural beauty just around the corner. In the winter, you can go from the shopping areas downtown to the ski slopes in just 20 minutes. The summers offer even more opportunities as both Marka and the Oslofjord with its islands are popular destinations for the people of Oslo and its many visitors.

Origin of the Name

The name Oslo is most likely composed of the words Os and lo, where Os is the name of a Viking God and lo means field. Hence, the word Oslo translates into the poetic "Field of Gods."


Oslo
HOMANS BYEN
GRÜNER-LØKKA
SOFIENBERG
GIMLE
SKILLEBECK
GAMLEBYEN
Svartes Gate
Kirke Veien
Gyldenløves Gate
Camilla Colletts Vei
Hefftyes Gate
Frogner Veien
Colbjørnsens Gate
Bygdøy Alle
Parkveien
Wergelands Veien
Pilestredet
St. Olav's Gate
Ullevålsveien
Akerselva (Aker River)
Trondheimsveien
Sars Gate
Torg Gata
Drammens Veien
Karl Johans Gate
Akers Gate
Kongens Gate
Munkedams Veien
Prinsens Gate
Rådhusgata
Frognerstranda
Frognerkilen
Akershusstranda
1. Oscarshall Slott (castle); Norsk Folkmuseum; Vikingskipshuset
2. Dronningen; Bygdøy peninsula
3. Kon-Tiki Museet; Frammuseet; Norsk Sjøfartsmuseum
4. Vigelandmuseet; Oslo Bymuseum; Dukketeatret; Frognerparken
5. Slottsparken; Slottet (castle)
6. Historiskmuseet
7. Nasjonalgalleriet; Universitetet Oslo; Norske Teatret
Ferry lines
8. Ibsenmuseet
9. Konserthuset; Rådhusplassen; Rådhuset (town hall)
10. Musikkteatret
11. Akershus Slot (castle); Forsvarsmuseet
12. Oslo Domkirke (Cathedral)
13. Oslo Sentralstasjon
14. Vår Frelsers Gravlund; Gamle Aker Kirke (Old Aker Church)
15. Munchmuseet; Universitetets Naturhistoriske Museer
16. Gamelbyen Gravlund
N
NOT TO SCALE
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Brief History

Oslo is the oldest of the three Scandinavian capitals. It was officially founded around the year 1050 by Harald Hårdråde, but there is evidence of a city existing as far back as the year 1000. It was no coincidence that people first settled on the fertile grounds where Oslo is now at the end of the Oslofjord. Nor was it an accident that the Vikings developed a village here, which gave them access to the ocean, while they also had control over ships coming into the harbor, all of which had to enter through the bottleneck-shaped fjord. The city thrived commercially during the Viking Age and continued to flourish in the Middle Ages when the kings started taking over and Christianity became the main religion.

Akershus Castle was built around the year 1300 by King Håkon V at a time when Oslo took over as capital of Norway after Bergen. In 1624, King Christian IV changed the name of the city from Oslo to Christiania in honor of himself. Norway had already been under Danish rule for a few centuries and, when the city was completely rebuilt after a disastrous fire, the king decided to start a new era for the city under a new name. In 1925, 20 years after the dissolution of the union between Sweden and Norway, the city's name was changed back to Oslo.

Getting Here

By Plane

The **Gardermoen International Airport** is about 50 km (30 miles) north of the city and is the main airport for international travelers arriving in Norway by plane. The best way to get from the airport to downtown Oslo is by an NSB train to the Central Train Station, which takes 30 minutes by and costs about

75 kr/$12. You can also take the faster, more frequent but also more expensive **Airport Express Train**, ☎ 81-500777, www.flytoget.no, which saves you about 10 minutes but costs 100 kr/$16 more than an NSB train.

The Airport Bus, ☎ 22-804971, www.flybussen.no, departs every 20 minutes and is cheaper than the express train but more expensive than NSB. The bus ride takes approximately 40 minutes but has the advantage of making several stops in the city center where most hotels are located.

A **taxi** from the airport will set you back about 600 kr/$95.

Sandefjord Airport Torp is 100 km (60 miles) southwest of Oslo and is the hub for no-frills airline Ryanair, with flights from London, Frankfurt and Glasgow. Buses run from the airport to Oslo; they correspond with Ryanair's flights and cost 130 kr/$19.

By Bus & Train

The **Central Bus and Train Stations** in Oslo are next to each other with an overhead walkway connecting them. The Central Train Station (Oslo S) has direct train connections with Copenhagen in Denmark, which takes 7½ hours on the high-speed train. Gothenburg in Sweden, which is on that route, is 3½ hours from Oslo. From Stockholm in Sweden, the trip takes about five hours. Check timetables and prices on www.nsb.no.

Domestically, the **Bergen Railway line**, connecting Oslo and Bergen, takes about seven hours and is one of the most scenic rides in the country. Oslo also has connections with Trondheim, a 6½-hour trip, and Åndalsnes in the northern fjord region. Both routes take you through Dombås in the central part of Norway.

The **Nor-Way Bussekspress** connects Oslo with most cities in the country wherever trains are not available.

By Car

The E6 Highway takes you to Oslo if you are coming in from the south or the north. If arriving along the coastline southwest of the city, you'll be taking the E18 Highway.

By Boat

Oslo has connections with Copenhagen in Denmark via Helsingborg in Sweden with **DFDS Seaways**, ☎ 23-106800, www.dfds.no. You can also get to Oslo from Fredrikshavn in northern Denmark with Stena Line, ☎ 23-719100, www.stenaline.no, or from Hirsthals in the northwest corner of Denmark with Color Line, ☎ 81-000811, www.colorline.no.

Getting Around

By Bus, Tram & Metro

Oslo has an extensive network of public transportation. There are 68 different bus routes, eight tram lines and five lines on the Metro at your disposal. Even though Oslo has a compact city center and many attractions are within walking distance, you will find the buses, trams and Metro useful. Remember that tickets for the Metro are only sold at the stations and not onboard, whereas on trams and buses you can buy tickets onboard.

> **Tip: The Oslo Pass** provides you with free public transportation within the city limits except on night-buses (see page 285).

By Boat

This is a convenient way to get around in the Oslofjord during the summer. You can take guided tours, visit some of the many islands or other popular places along the fjord such as Bygdøy, where many of the museums are located. Most boats depart from the piers outside the Oslo City Hall. The majority only operate in the summer, but if you wish to take a guided tour in the low-season there are about three daily departures.

Orientation & Sightseeing

The main street in Oslo is the pedestrian way called **Karl Johan**, between the Central Train Station and the Royal Palace. The city center is compact and many of the shops, restaurants and attractions in the city are in this area. There are a few attrac-

tions just outside the city center that require transportation, most notably Holmenkollen, the museums at Bygdøy, the Henie-Onstad Museum and the Munch Museum. Just about everything else is within walking distance from Karl Johan.

Many of the city's landmarks, such as the cathedral, the Parliament (Stortinget) and the university, are along Karl Johan, with the Royal Palace at the end. The street is named after Karl III Johan (called Karl XIV Johan in Sweden), the king of the Sweden-Norway union, whom the Palace was built for. Karl Johan is also where the official parades are held in Oslo; the most important is the annual celebration on Constitution Day, May 17th. In 2004 and the first half of 2005, a lot of improvements were made on Karl Johan in preparation for another big event, the centenary of the union dissolution, which occurred in 1905.

Although Oslo is an old city, the downtown area as we know it today is quite young; Karl Johan, for example, wasn't built until the 19th century. One of the oldest parts of town that still exists today is near the Akershus Castle in the southeastern city center. The view from Akershus is spectacular, overlooking the city and the fjord, making it easy to understand why the castle was built here around the year 1300. The area around Akershus is well preserved, with houses from the 17th century. Walking around here, you'll find such buildings as the first town hall of Christiania, the Garrison Hospital, the War College and the first national bank of Norway.

From Akershus Castle you are only a short walk from the city hall and the harbor. **Aker Brygge**, the district by the harbor, with its long line of open-air restaurants overlooking the fjord, is perhaps the most popular place in the summer to hang out.

Another area attracting visitors in the summers is **The Frogner Park**, in the western section of Oslo. This is where you will find the famous **Vigeland Park**, containing over 200 bronze sculptures by Gustav Vigeland, Norway's most famous sculptor, who was also in charge of designing the park itself. The statues are interesting to look at but densely placed, which makes the whole experience a bit overwhelming after a short while. If the Vigeland sculptures intrigue you, there's also a museum with Vigeland's work just across from the park on Nobelsgate, which is open Tuesdays-Sundays, all year. The

Vigeland Park

park itself is open to the public 24 hours a day every day throughout the year. Perhaps the most interesting district in the city is **Grünerløkka**, which you will find in the northeastern part of town near the river Akerselva. This district was considered one of the "bad" neighborhoods of Oslo until just a few years ago. Grünerløkka, as well as **Grønland**, another district nearby, has a high immigrant population and they are today popular areas, particularly among the youth, with plenty of cafés, pubs and restaurants.

Pick up a copy of ***What's On***, an event guide with tips on events offered when you are there.

Guided Tours

❖ City Sightseeing

These bus tours depart daily, May-September, from the city hall and take you through the downtown area past the most important sights and landmarks, such as the Vigeland Park and along the main shopping street, Karl Johan. The "Oslo in a Nutshell" tour is a combined bus and boat tour which also takes you by boat to Bygdøy, where many of the city's museums are located. ☎ 22-955414, www.citysightseeing.com.

OSLO PASS

The Oslo Pass can be purchased at any tourist office, most hotels, campsites and at the Gardermoen Airport. It gives you free access to nearly all museums and sights in the city. In addition, you get free travel on

public communication as well as free parking in public car parks. The card also gives you various discounts at car rentals, restaurants and souvenir shops. The pass costs 195 kr/$29 for 24 hours, 285 kr/$42 for 48 hours and 375 kr/$55 for 72 hours. Children ages four-15 pay 75 kr/$11 for 24 hours, 95 kr/$14 for 48 hours and 125 kr/$18 for 72 hours.

❖ Hop On Hop Off

An alternative to the City Sightseeing tours is to take the classic double-decker buses. These tours make 12 stops and you can get on and off at any of them. Buses come along at 30-minute intervals and the ticket is valid for two days.

❖ H.M.K Sightseeing & Tours

This is another company with a variety of tours offered, lasting from two to four hours. All tours include, in addition to the regular sights such as the Vigeland Park, a trip up to the famous Holmenkollen Ski Arena. The longer tours include trips to Bygdøy and the museums. ☎ 23-157300, www.hmk.no.

❖ Båtservice Sightseeing

This company offers boat tours and combined boat and bus tours, departing several times per day, every day during the summer, from Pier no 3 outside the City Hall. More information about specific boat tours on the Oslofjord under *Adventures On Water*. ☎ 23-356890, www.boatsightseeing.com.

Practical Information

Tourist Offices

The main tourist office in Oslo is between Fridtjof Nansens Plass, where the city hall is located, and Karl Johan, the main shopping street, ☎ 24-147700, www.visitoslo.com. There is another office at the Central Train Station by the main entrance at the Jernbanetorget Square. At the train station you will also find Trafikanten, an office that can provide you with information about public communication in the greater Oslo area, ☎ 81-500176, www.trafikanten.no.

Use It, the Youth Information Center on Møllergate near the cathedral, is a great place to go if you are seeking the low-budget alternatives in town on anything from attractions to dining and accommodations. Oslo is one of the most expensive cities in the world and this information center can be a helpful tool in your visit to the nation's capital. You can also obtain information about other parts of Norway here; the staff will, for example, help you find the cheapest way to travel between any destinations within the country.

Shopping

Most visitors in Oslo go shopping on the main pedestrian street, **Karl Johan**, where many of the shops and shopping centers are located. The prices are a bit higher in these stores as opposed to the rest of the city, especially the souvenir shops which are easily recognized by the characteristic wooden trolls standing outside the entrances. The harbor district **Aker Brygge** has a great atmosphere and is just as popular as Karl Johan. In the summer there are many street musicians and artists in these busy shopping areas.

The best shopping, however, is found by taking Torggata starting at Stortorvet by the cathedral and walking up toward Youngstorget, the square with the biggest market in Oslo in the summertime. Keep walking up Torggata and across the river Akerselva into **Grünerløkka**, sometimes called "the Soho of Oslo," where you will find some interesting shops at reasonable prices. The shops here along **Markveien** and **Thorvald Meyers Gate**, the two main streets, are much smaller and more personable than those on Karl Johan and you can make some really good deals too.

The normal shopping hours are Monday-Friday, 10 am-5 pm, Saturday, 9 am-5 pm, but many shops stay open longer, especially in the shopping centers. Most shops close on Sundays, but souvenir shops are the exception.

Nightlife

The nightlife in Oslo has picked up considerably over the last few years and now there are a vast number of bars, pubs and clubs. Many cafés serving coffee and sandwiches during the day stay open in the evenings as well and have become popular. While the cafés close around 10, most bars and clubs stay open until 3 am. You can expect to pay around 50 kr/$7 for a pint of beer; the cheapest places can be found around Grønland and Tøyen in the eastern part of Oslo. Naturally, the places around Karl Johan are going to be more expensive than the ones in the outskirts of downtown. Aker Brygge is one of the most expensive areas in the whole city to go out.

Adventures

Remember that the **Oslo Pass** takes you into virtually every attraction for free. Wherever the admission fee is mentioned in the sections below, it is implied that entrance is free with this pass unless otherwise noted.

On Foot

❖ Holmenkollen

When a place is the most visited attraction in a city there is usually a good reason for it. Holmenkollen, the famous ski jump arena northwest of the city, is not only the most visited attraction in Oslo but in the entire country. Holmenkollen has had its ski arena since the end of the 19th century but it's changed quite a bit over the past hundred years. One of the biggest renovations was made in preparation for the Winter Olympics in 1952.

There are typically three things to do at Holmenkollen: visiting the Ski Museum, climbing up to the tower, and going on a ride in the simulator. There is also a café and a souvenir shop, but your time and money can be better spent elsewhere. The tower is accessed through the museum and your entrance fee covers both attractions. Holmenkollen is 357 m (1,000 feet)

above sea level and the jump tower, an additional 60 m (180 feet). You get there by walking up the stairs (which in the winter can be slippery with ice) and, once there, you will have the same fantastic view that the jumpers have. The view over Oslo and the Oslofjord is nothing short of spectacular.

The museum is supposedly the oldest ski museum in the world and it depicts the history of skiing since its infancy, about 4,000 years ago.

The area around Holmenkollen is also well known for its cross-country tracks, which are some of the most visited in the Marka region and it has hosted a couple of world championships over the years.

The Holmenkollen Ski Arena is open daily all year, in June-August from 9 am-8 pm and during the rest of the year from 10 am-4 pm (May 10 am-5 pm). Admission is 60 kr$8.80 to the museum and jump tower and 50 kr (40 kr with Oslo Pass) to take a ride in the ski simulator. Contact Holmenkollen, ☎ 22-923200, www.holmenkollen.com and www.skiforeningen.no.

Getting to Holmenkollen by Metro

Metro number 1 takes you to the Holmenkollen Station in about 20 minutes from the downtown stations at Karl Johan, such as Stortinget or the National Theatre. From the Holmenkollen Station, cross the bridge and walk up the hill past the Holmenkollen Restaurant and just follow the signs. The walk up to the arena takes about 10 minutes from the station.

❖ Akershus Fortress

The Akershus Castle in the southeastern part of the city center was built in the early 14th century by King Håkon V. Oslo had just become the capital of Norway as construction commenced at the strategically elevated position overlooking the harbor. Despite its location, the castle was initially intended more as a royal residence than for defense purposes. In the early 17th century, the castle was completely rebuilt in Renaissance style by King Christian IV after a fire that burned down the whole city. Houses were then rebuilt in stone near the walls surrounding the Akershus Castle. Today, the

area can be divided into two parts for visitors, **Akershus Slott** and **Akershus Festning**. Akershus Slott, which is the Castle itself, is only open to the public in the summer, with the exception of guided tours on Thursdays in the low season. Akershus Festning is the entire area around the castle, which is open every day all year between 6 am and 9 pm.

❖ The City Hall

The exterior of the Oslo City Hall, at Fridtjof Nansens Plass, does not look inviting, but the interior, and the view of the harbor from one of the rooms, makes it well worth a visit. The city hall is the seat of the city council and was inaugurated in 1950. It's most famous as the building where the Nobel Peace Prize is handed out on December 10 every year. This is the only Nobel Prize presented outside Nobel's native country of Sweden. When the Nobel Foundation was founded, Norway and Sweden still formed a union.

Guided tours of the Oslo City Hall are offered all year three times a day (10 am, 12 noon and 2 pm), which you should take advantage of. The tours are included in the admission, which is 40 kr/$6 in the summer (May-September) and free in the winter. For more information on the City Hall, ☎ 23-461600.

❖ Hiking

Marka, with its mountains, lakes and forests, makes Oslo unique among capitals in Europe, not only because of the proximity to downtown but because of how it's set up, with signs clearly indicating the way around. For hikers, there is a floodlight system on the trails, which are also used for other activities such as biking, horseback riding and cross-country skiing. The Norwegian Mountain Touring Association (DNT) has an office in downtown Oslo across from the cathedral where you can obtain information about where to go. DNT, Storgata 3, ☎ 22-822822, www.dntoslo.no.

On Water

❖ The Oslofjord & Its Islands

There are about a dozen smaller islands just south of downtown Oslo where you'll find some of the best beaches in the city. The water in the fjord

is clean and well suited for bathing despite the ferry traffic. Boats to the islands depart from the Vippetangen Quay at the tip of the peninsula where Akershus Castle is located. **Hovedøya** is the main island and the one nearest to the city.

Båtservice Sightseeing is a company offering plenty of options for those wishing to explore the scenic Oslofjord. Choose between the mini-cruise, lasting 50 minutes for 105 kr/$15, or the two-hour tour for 195 kr/$29. You can also take a combined boat and bus tour of Oslo, which can last anywhere from three hours to the whole day. There are about four different tours, ranging from 300 to 500 kr/$44-73. The boats will take you along the Oslofjord and stop at some of the museums. All boats depart from Pier number 3 outside the city hall every day during the summer. **Båtservice Sightseeing**, ☎ 23-356890, www.boatsightseeing.com.

On Wheels

❖ Biking

Oslo is a bike-friendly city and taking a sightseeing tour on a bike is a great way to explore Oslo in the summer. Free "city-bikes" are available at several locations in the center. In order to get a bike you need to obtain a card by paying a deposit of 500 kr/$73 at one of the tourist offices (see *Practical Information*, page 286). You can take the bike wherever you want as long as you return it within three hours to any of the places where bikes are picked up. Check with the tourist office where the nearest or most convenient one for you is located. The deposit will be refunded upon return of the card.

Away from the City

Marka, with its mountains and forests, is where you'll find the ultimate biking experiences in Oslo. The trails used for skiing in the winter are just as good for biking in the summer. Rent your bikes at **Skiservice** by the Voksenkollen Station, ☎ 22-139500; expect to pay around 300 kr/$44 per day. You can also take a "city-bike" with you on the Metro and ride it down from one of the stations in the Holmenkollen area. This is a nice trip with great views and it's all downhill.

South of the city you have **Nesodden**, a peninsula just south of the harbor, which is perfect for a bike tour along the fjord. You can get here by taking a boat from the harbor, departing every hour in the summertime, and then, if you wish, bike your way back into the city along the shoreline.

The **Norwegian Bicycle Association**, ☎ 22-473030, has an office on Storgata 23, where you can get tips and information about all kinds of trails, not just in Oslo, but in other parts of the country.

On Snow

❖ Skiing

Cross-country skiing is a popular recreational activity in Norway and **Nordmarka** (North Marka) offers plenty of good tracks. Take the Metro, either line 1 toward Frognerseteren or line 3 to Sognsvann, from the city center. **Frognerseteren** is only 30 minutes from downtown but 435 m (1,200 feet) above sea level. At the Voksenkollen station, which is the last station before you get to Frognerseteren, you can rent skis and start heading out into the woods (see *Tryvann Winter Park*, below, for contact information). You have over 2,500 km (1,500 miles) of prepared cross-country tracks, of which 90 km (55 miles) are illuminated, which is much appreciated since the sun sets around 3 pm in December and January. The trails are well marked and you'll find it easy to get around these tracks. You don't even need to worry about bringing food with you on your trip as there are 68 cabins in Marka where you can buy food and drink and a few of them even offer accommodation.

Tryvann Winter Park

Tryvann was expanded 50% in 2003 by connecting the slopes of a nearby resort named Wyller. There are now 14 slopes and six lifts, which makes it the biggest ski resort in Oslo and one of the biggest in Norway. There can't be many capitals in the world, if there are any, offering a ski resort of this size within the city limits and just a 20-minute drive from downtown. If you don't have a car, you just take the Metro (No 1) toward Frognerseteren and get off at Voksenkollen, the second-to-last station. From there you take a short bus ride to

Tryvann. In total, the trip doesn't take much more than 30 minutes.

Although the degree of difficulty varies from one slope to another, skiing in Tryvann is relatively easy. Experienced skiers will find a challenge in the 1½-km (.9-mile) Wyllerløypa slope. There are plenty of ski schools available on the premises and a designated area for kids as well.

Although skiing in Tryvann is good, it's by no means the best that Scandinavia has to offer. However, thanks to Oslo's proximity, it definitely has the most after-ski activities, and that makes the whole experience worthwhile regardless of how your skiing went.

The season in Tryvann is normally December-April and the slopes are open Monday-Friday from 10 am to 10 pm and Saturday-Sunday from 10 am 5 pm. The floodlight system makes night skiing popular on weekdays.

Contact **Tryvann Winter Park**, ☎ 40-462700, www.tryvann.no.

Ski Rentals

Tomm Murstad Skiservice, Voksenkollen Station, Tryvannsveien 2, ☎ 22-139500, www.skiservice.no. Ski rentals for both alpine and cross-country skiing cost about 200 kr/$30 for one day, which includes skis, poles and boots. The shop is open daily 9 am-10 pm.

Lift tickets

A daily ticket for an adult costs 275 kr/$40 (children 220 kr) and can be purchased at the information center in Tryvann. In addition, anyone skiing in Tryvann (and many other resorts in Norway) is required to use a key card, which can be bought where you buy lift tickets. The card costs 75 kr/$11 and you can either keep it for skiing in other resorts or return it and get 25 kr back.

❖ Tobogganing

The well-known toboggan run, **Korketrekkeren** (the corkscrew), was used for the bobsled competition in the 1952 Olympics and is today used by the general public. The start is at Frognerseteren Station and the finish at Midtstuen, which is one of the stations

on the way up to Frognerseteren. You can set your own pace by applying the brakes on the toboggan; normally, the ride should take about eight to 10 minutes. Once you've reached Midtstuen, just take the Metro up to the top again and, if you wish, start all over. Toboggans can be rented for the entire day at **Skiservice**, for 80 kr/$12, ☎ 22-139500.

On Ice

❖ Ice-Skating

The lakes in **Marka**, if it's cold enough, are good places for skating. Otherwise, there are several places with artificial ice near the city center, such as the well-known **Frogner Stadium** at the Frogner Park and the **Valle Hovin Stadium** in the east section of town. Valle Hovin can offer skate rentals. The most central place to skate in Oslo is **Narvisen**, which is right next to Karl Johan and is popular. This rink is open November-March and skating here is free. It's usually pretty crowded, however, and families with children are the main users. Narvisen also has equipment for rent.

Cultural Adventures

Oslo is the cultural center of Norway and, despite its relatively small size, has a surprisingly large number of really good museums. The museums in Oslo are all within easy reach of the city center and generally not expensive; with the Oslo Pass, most of them are free. You will not have time to visit all cultural attractions the city has to offer so choose wisely and plan ahead. If you plan to go to Trondheim, for example (or if you have already been), don't bother visiting the cathedral in Oslo, which doesn't come close to the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim.

At **Bygdøy**, the peninsula west of the city center, you can spend the entire day visiting a variety of the city's most famous museums. If the weather is good, it's also a really fine area to just go for a stroll. The beaches here are some of the most popular in the city and are always appreciated on hot summer days.

The summer is definitely the best time to visit Oslo for cultural attractions – they are open much longer and you'll have

time to visit more of them. Most museums are open every day, but some will be closed on Mondays.

> **Celebrations:** May 17 is Norway's Constitution Day. It's celebrated throughout the country but the children's parade in the nation's capital is the highlight.

Museums

❖ Norsk Folkemuseum

This open-air museum is on Bygdøy next to some of the other famous museums in Oslo. If you want to learn about Norwegian culture and traditions, this is the best place to go. The stave church here was bought by the union king, Oskar II, in 1885 and transported from its original place in Hallingsdal. Much of the foundation is from the Middle Ages, while the roof has been renovated to make it look like Borgund Stave Church, one of the most famous in Norway. Like most open-air museums, this one is well suited for kids but there are many other exhibits and events to be enjoyed by all age groups.

Norsk Folkemuseum, ☎ 22-123700, is open every day all year-round, 10 am-6 pm in the summer and 11 am-3 pm in the low season.

❖ Oseberg Viking Ship Museum

This is another attraction at the museum-dense Bygdøy. The Viking ship is one of the main reasons for our fascination with these seafarers from the past and Oseberg has the three best-preserved ships in the world. The ships were found about 100 years ago in Oseberg in the county of Vestfold, not far from Oslo, where the blue clay soil had preserved them amazingly well for about 1,100 years. The museum also has some of the best evidence we have today of fabric and weaving techniques from the Viking Age, found in and around the boats, along with many tools and weapons.

The Viking Ship Museum, ☎ 22-135280, is open May-September, 9 am-6 pm, and October-April, 11 am-4 pm.

❖ Art Museums

The National Museum of Art and the Munch Museum are well worth visiting. The **National Museum of Art** is next to the university just a couple of blocks from Karl Johan. It contains an extensive collection of both Norwegian and international art. Admission is free. Universitetsgaten 13, ☎ 22-200404.

Edvard Munch is the most famous Norwegian artist in history and is considered one of the pioneers in Expressionism. His *Skrik* (*The Scream*) is one of the most recognized paintings in the world. The **Munch Museum**, about a 10-minute walk from Karl Johan, contains thousands of Munch's paintings, donated to the city in accordance with his last will. Tøyengata 53, ☎ 23-241400.

In August of 2004, *Skrik* and *Madonna*, two of the most valuable paintings in the Munch Museum, were stolen. At the time this book was written, they had not yet been retrieved. Munch painted several "Screams" and one (which was stolen in 1994 but later retrieved) can still be viewed at the National Museum of Art in the section devoted to Munch.

The **Henie-Onstad Museum** is Oslo's museum of contemporary art and is in Høvikodden, a 15-minute bus ride west of the city, in a tranquil environment on the Oslofjord. The paintings were donated by the former Olympic ice-skating champion Sonja Henie and her husband Niels Onstad, who was a famous ship owner. During years of traveling the world, the couple acquired a collection of several hundred paintings, which they eventually decided would be best used for the general public to enjoy. The museum, which opened in 1968, contains works of art by such masters as Picasso, Matisse and

many more. There's also a separate room with all the medals and trophies from Sonja Henie's career, over 600 in total. Another reason to visit this museum is for the beautiful surroundings and Henie-Onstad is best visited in the summer for this reason. Another reason is the big sculpture park just outside. A bit farther down are some really good beaches which are popular as well. Høvikodden, ☎ 67-804880.

Places to Stay

Oslo has a vast supply of hotels in every price range. Location is not really an important factor when selecting one since nearly everything is within walking distance and public transportation is good if you happen to be just outside the downtown area. Staying in a hotel in downtown Oslo can be expensive, but there are a few exceptions. The tourist offices can help you with arranging accommodations for a small booking fee.

HOTEL PRICES NORWAY	
For double room including taxes. For hostels with no double rooms, price is per bed in dormitory.	
$	Under 300 kr ($47)
$$	300-600 kr ($48-$96)
$$$	601-1,200 kr ($97-$182)
$$$$	Over 1,200 kr ($182+)

The City Center

Radisson SAS Scandinavia Hotel, Holbergs gate 30, ☎ 23-293000, www.radisson.com, $$$$. This hotel is right next to the Royal Palace and has one of the best views of the city and the fjord.

Scandic KNA, Parkveien 68, ☎ 23-155700, www.scandic-hotels.com, $$$. Reasonably priced hotel within walking distance of all the city's attractions in the downtown area.

City Hotel, Skippergate 19, ☎ 22-413610, www.cityhotel.no, $$. This simple but comfortable hotel is just a five-minute walk from the Central Train Station. You have the option of rooms with or without bathrooms.

The Holmenkollen/Marka Area

Holmenkollen Park Hotel, Kongeveien 26, ☎ 22-922000, www.holmenkollenparkhotel.no, $$$$. One of the most luxurious and expensive hotels in the Oslo area. On the way up to the Holmenkollen Ski Jump Arena, it has a marvelous view of Oslo and the fjord.

Voksenåsen Hotel, Ullveien 4, ☎ 22-811500, www.voksenaasen.no, $$$. A cheaper alternative to the expensive Holmenkollen Park Hotel in the same area. The hotel has comfortable rooms, great views, and a really good restaurant in a pleasant atmosphere and with close proximity to Marka.

Bogstad Camping, Ankerveien 117, ☎ 22-510800, www.bogstadcamping.no, $-$$. Nine km from downtown Oslo near Tryvann Winter Park and with easy access to all the activities in Marka. It's open all year and in the summer this is the biggest campground in the country. Prices vary depending on season (more expensive in the summer) and size of cabin, but groups and families will find great deals here.

Places to Eat

Aker Brygge, the harbor district, is a must to visit in the summer with its long line of open-air restaurants. Eating out in Norway is much more expensive than in other countries and, if you need proof, just head to this area of Oslo where the view seems to be included in the price of the meals at some of the places.

RESTAURANT PRICES NORWAY	
For one main course & a beverage, including taxes.	
$	Less than 100 kr ($15)
$$	100-200 kr ($15-$30)
$$$	201-300 kr ($30-$44)
$$$$	Over 300 kr ($44+)

One thing you will notice in Oslo is that people enjoy sitting outside while enjoying a meal or a drink. Cold temperatures in the winter don't seem to be much of an obstacle either and heaters are placed at almost every open-air restaurant.

Lofoten Fiskerestaurant, Aker Brygge, ☎ 22-830808, $$$-$$$$. You don't have to go all the way up to Lofoten to enjoy good seafood. This restaurant has a wide selection of seafood as well as other types of food, but it's quite expensive.

TGI Friday's, Karl Johans Gate 35, ☎ 22-333200, $$-$$$. Not the cheapest place to get a hamburger but by Oslo standards, still a reasonably priced restaurant with good food and good service.

Teddy's Soft Bar, Brugata 3, ☎ 22-176436, $-$$. Cozy place on the pedestrian Brugata with a relaxed atmosphere and light meals at reasonable prices.

Excursions

Oscarsborg Castle

Drøbak is a town along the Oslofjord about 30 km (18 miles) south of Oslo, where you will find the Oscarsborg Castle. The location at the narrowest point on the fjord made it ideal for defensive purposes and a fortress was here even during Christian IV's regime in the 17th century. In the mid-19th century, Sweden-Norway decided that a new modern fortress was needed to defend the city and the Oscarsborg Castle, named after the union king, was completed in the 1850s. The castle played a crucial role in 1940 when the Norwegians sank the German warship *Blücher*, which gave Norway some breathing room in the Second World War.

Since the war, the castle has not been needed for defense and is now mostly a destination for excursions. Oscarsborg is open to the public all year and, if you visit in the summer, there are often concerts and other events offered.

You can get to Drøbak from Oslo, either by taking the boat that departs from Aker Brygge in the summer once a day during weekdays, or by taking the bus from the bus terminal, which leaves almost hourly year-round.

For more information about Oscarsborg, ☎ 81-551900.

■ The Fjord Region

Introduction

The fjords were created during the latest Ice Age when the layer of ice, which was three km (1.8 mile) thick, cut deep incisions in the earth's crust. Fjords are found all along the coastline in Norway but the majority are in the four western counties of Møre and Romsdal, Sogn and Fjordane, Hordaland and Rogaland.

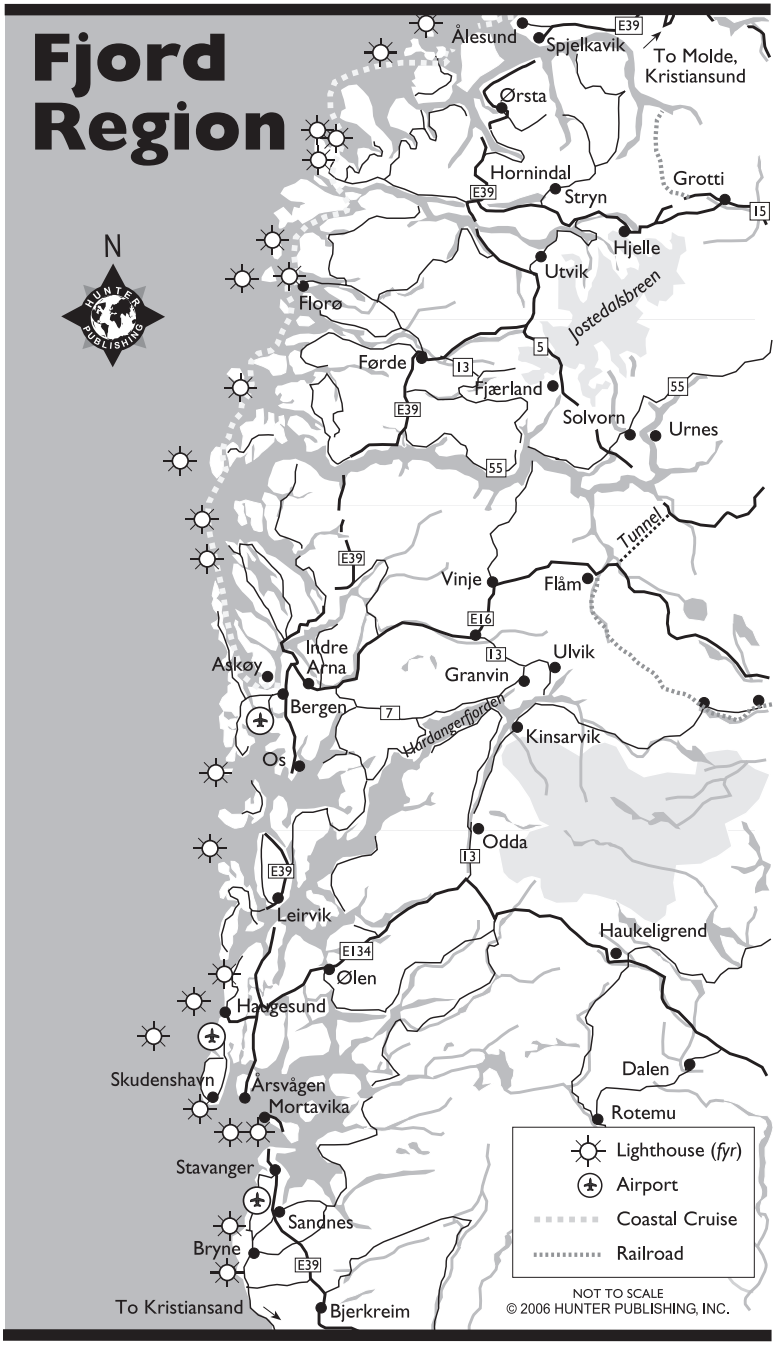
The four major fjords in this region are **Hardangerfjord**, **Sognefjord**, **Nordfjord** and **Geirangerfjord**. Sognefjord is the longest and also the deepest of the Norwegian fjords; some parts of it have been measured as deep as 1,300 m (4,000 feet). Geirangerfjord has some of the most spectacular waterfalls found anywhere in the world. Hardangerfjord is known for its flowers and fruit orchards in the springtime.

The west coast of Norway had been frequently visited for centuries, starting when Bergen became an important port for the Hanseatic League in the Middle Ages. The merchants in those days were mostly just interested in business and it wasn't until the 19th century that visitors to the west coast started venturing inland and discovered the fjords. Gradually, the fjord region became more and more popular and the British were particularly keen on traveling across the North Sea to enjoy this unique environment. Before long, organized boat trips were introduced and people from all over Europe followed in the Brits' footsteps. In those days, by the end of the 19th century, it was only the wealthy who could afford such trips and royals in particular were intrigued by this newly discovered destination. The German emperor Wilhelm II was so impressed by his first visit to the fjords that he came back almost every year after that. Kings and queens from all over Europe and even the Far East also made western Norway one of their favorite getaways.

> *In the March 2004 issue of the* **National Geographic Traveler**, *a global survey done by 200 specialists was reported, ranking the Norwegian Fjords as the world's greatest destination.*

Climate

The climate of western Norway is highly affected by the Gulf Stream. This means that the summers are much warmer than in other regions at the same latitude, such as Alaska and Siberia; the winters are mild but wet. The average temperature in July is 15°C (60°F), as opposed to 1.5°C (34°F) in January. On nice summer days the high temperatures can get up to about 22-24°C (73°F), but rarely more.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Urnes
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Tunnel
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Vinje
Flåm
E16
Indre Arna
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Ulvik
Askøy
Granvin
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Hardangerfjorden
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Odda
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E39
Leirvik
Haukeligrend
E134
Ølen
Haugesund
Dalen
Skudenshavn
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Rotemu
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Rogaland

Introduction

Rogaland has played an important part in Norway's history and continues to do so.

It was in Rogaland, during the Viking Age, that Harald Hårfagre, who came from this region, united Norway in the year 872. Hårfagre fought many battles all over the country and won the final one at Hafsfjord in Rogaland. Many other Vikings came from this region and their journeys often started at one of the ports along the coast of this county.

These days, however, Rogaland is mostly known for its oil. Norway is the third-largest oil exporter in the world and Stavanger, the biggest city in Rogaland and fourth-biggest city in Norway, with nearly 100,000 inhabitants, is known as the "oil capital" of Norway.

The oil business has made Rogaland richer and increased the population over the last decades, but the tourists, of course, come for completely different reasons. Most venture outside the city limits such as to the Lysefjord or the Ryfylke area.

Getting Here & Getting Around

❖ By Plane

Sola Airport is just outside **Stavanger** and offers flights to and from Oslo, Trondheim, Kristiansand and Bergen with **SAS**, **Braathens** and **Widerøe**. Domestic flights can be expensive but if traveling from Bergen, Widerøe sometimes has special offers, which can be worth checking out, considering the time and money it can take to go by car. From Oslo, it's also worth checking **Norwegian Airlines** for better rates.

❖ By Boat

Stavanger and **Haugesund**, north of Stavanger, have ferry connections with Newcastle in England. There is another route connecting **Haugesund** and **Egersund**, a 1½-hour drive south of Stavanger, with **Hanstholm** in Denmark. All three routes are operated by **Fjord Line**, ☎ 81-533500, www.fjordline.no.

Flaggruten, ☎ 81-522120, www.hsd.no, takes you between **Bergen** and **Stavanger** at a cost of 620 kr/$91 one-way, but you can get a round-trip ticket for only 170 kr/$25 more. The trip takes about four hours each way.

There are several companies with sightseeing boats operating in the Lysefjord:

Stavangerske, ☎ 51-868700, www.stavangerske.no.

Veteran Fjord Cruise, ☎ 51-538585, www.fjord-cruise.no.

Fjord Tours Panorama, ☎ 51-537340, www.fjord-panorama.no.

❖ By Bus & Train

The train station in Stavanger is in the city center. Stavanger to Oslo takes about eight hours. For reservations, ☎ 51-569600.

Kystbussen, ☎ 81-500182, www.kystbussen.no, takes you from Bergen via Leirvik to Stavanger and Haugesund in Rogaland. Otherwise, it's the reliable **Nor-Way Bussekspress** that takes you around to other towns in Norway.

❖ By Car

If you're driving from Bergen, bear in mind that you have to pay for car-ferries and road tolls in several places, which makes the trip both expensive and slow. From Oslo, the trip by car takes about seven hours, but there are no tolls. If traveling from the northern parts of the Fjord region, you can take the scenic **RV 13**, which starts in Sogn and Fjordane, takes you through Voss in Hordaland and along the beautiful Hardangerfjord before entering Ryfylke in Rogaland.

Stavanger Taxi, ☎ 51-909090.

Car Rental Companies in Stavanger

Avis, Skansegaten 15, ☎ 51-939360.

Budget, Lagårdsveien 125, ☎ 51-522133 or 51-650729 (Airport).

Hertz, Olav V's Gata 13, ☎ 51-520000 or 51-651096 (Airport).

Stavanger

Stavanger established itself as the center of commerce for the southern fjord region in the Middle Ages. Trading, fishing and shipping have been the main commercial activities here ever since the city was founded in the 12th century. In the modern era, this was still the case until the 1960s and 1970s, when the oil business gave Stavanger the financial uplift it desperately needed at the time. Oil drilling started in the North Sea in 1966 and Stavanger has been the unofficial oil capital of Norway ever since.

Sightseeing

While in Stavanger there are a few things you shouldn't miss. The **Old Town** has one of the best-preserved groups of 18th- and 19th-century wooden houses in Norway and is just a five-minute walk from the city center. The **cathedral** on Løkkeveien downtown is well worth visiting. It was originally built in the 12th century and, although part of it had to be rebuilt after a fire, it has maintained its original style, which makes it unique among medieval churches in Norway.

Those who want to find out more about the "black gold" that put Stavanger on the map 40 years ago can visit the **Norwegian Petroleum Museum** on the harbor. Everything from how oil originated on our planet to the technology used on the rigs in the North Sea is explained there. The museum, ☎ 51-939300, is open daily year-round, from 10 am until 7 pm (to 4 pm in low season). Admission is 80 kr/$12 for adults (40 for children). Find out more at www.norskolje.museum.no.

Adventures

❖ On Foot Along the Lysefjord

Preikestolen (Prekestolen) is one of the most photographed places in Norway and can be seen in virtually every brochure. The name *preikestolen* means "the pulpit," but the view you get here is a little different from the inside of a church. There are several rock formations in Norway named Preikestolen, from Finnmark in the north to this one outside Stavanger, which is by far the most famous of all. The area is about half the size of

a football field and almost as flat, though I wouldn't recommend playing here. The vertical drop down to the Lysefjord is 600 m (2,000 feet) so the view is best enjoyed while standing still or sitting down.

The combined hike required to get here, followed by an hour or two of sunbathing while you enjoy the spectacular scenery, is an adventure you should not miss in Rogaland. BASE-jumping, jumping from a fixed object with a parachute, is done here as well, even though it's now strictly prohibited, as it is at Trollveggen outside Åndalsnes (read more about BASE-jumping and Trollveggen in the *Møre and Romsdal* chapter, page 335).

You will find Preikestolen about 65 km (39 miles) east of Stavanger. From Jøssang, near Road 13, there's a small road leading up to the Preikestolhytta (cabin) and from there it's about a two-hour hike to Preikestolen. From Stavanger, you can also take the car-ferry to Tau, then drive south to Jøssang. The ferry is also your best option if you don't have a car and there are buses available from Tau with schedules that are coordinated with the ferries.

Kjerag can be a good alternative to Preikestolen, especially in the summer when Preikestolen can get a little crowded. Kjerag is no less spectacular; on the contrary, the elevation of 1,000 m (3,000 feet) provides an even more majestic view. The main reason why fewer people come here compared to Preikestolen is because it's farther from Stavanger and more difficult to access. The best way to get here is to take the ferry from Stavanger to Lysebotn, then drive up to Øygardstøl. From there you will have a two- to three-hour hike up to Kjerag. The ferry leaves once a day at 10 am from the harbor in Stavanger. You can also drive east on E39 to Ålgård and then take Road 45 to Sirdalen; then just follow the signs for Lysebotn. The drive will take you about two hours from Stavanger but remember that Road 45 will normally not open until May and then closes in October because of snow.

The hike up to Kjerag is quite demanding. It's only six km (3.6 miles) but there is also a change in elevation of almost 500 m (1,500 feet). The trail is well marked so you won't have any trouble finding the way, but the difficult part is the terrain and you may even have to walk through some snow if it's early

in the season. The high altitude means that snow will sometimes be on the ground well into June.

Once you've reached the top of Kjerag you can enjoy the view of the Lysefjord, 1,000 m (3,000 feet) below you, 400 m (1,200 feet) higher than Preikestolen. The most famous section in the area is the Kjeragbolten, which is a rock wedged in between two mountains. Those who dare can walk out on the rock, which is perfectly safe to do (as long as you don't lose your balance).

Much less safe is BASE-jumping which is still legal here. It may be safer here than other places but there are still several BASE-jumping accidents every year at Kjerag and it's probably only a matter of time before it's prohibited here as well.

❖ On Wheels

Biking

Sandnes, Rogaland's second-biggest city, is known as "the bicycle town" and is just a 15-minute drive south of Stavanger. The nickname is not given to Sandnes only because it's a nice place for bike excursions; the city has also been making bicycles since the late 19th century. DBS became one of the most popular brand names for bikes in Scandinavia during the 20th century. (The abbreviation stands for Den Beste Sykkel meaning "the best bike," which a 12-year-old came up with in a competition announced by the company in the 1930s to find the best name). For visitors to Sandnes today, there are town-bikes, free of charge, available to explore the city. Just ask at the tourist office for keys; a small deposit is required.

For longer excursions, there are several good routes to choose from. Two good options, especially if you plan to spend a few days out there, are the **North Sea Route** and the **Ryfylke Islands**. The North Sea Route covers seven countries around the North Sea for a total of 6,000 km (3,700 miles). If this sounds like too much for you, the stretch along the Rogaland coastline south of Sandnes should fulfill your needs.

To the north, between Stavanger and Haugesund, the Ryfylke Islands are great for island-hopping with your bike.

Bike Rentals

- **Naboen**, Madlaveien 50, ☎ 51-810300, 51-570710.
- **Spinn Sykkelshop**, Vågsgaten 7, ☎ 51-675310.
- **Sandnes Tourist Office**, ☎ 51-975555.

Places to Stay

Best Western Havly Hotel, Valberggaten 1, Stavanger, ☎ 51-896700, www.havly-hotell.no, $$$. $$$. A modern hotel in downtown Stavanger with 42 rooms. All rooms were completely refurbished in 2002.

Thon Hotel Sandnes, Roald Amundsens Gate 115, Sandnes, ☎ 51-962000, www.rainbow-hotels.no, $$-$$$. Near Sandnes, only 12 km (7.2 miles) from the Sola Airport. Located in quiet surroundings but near the city center of Sandnes, only nine km from the Sola Airport and 14 km from Stavanger. There are 80 high-quality, newly refurbished rooms.

Preikestolhytta Hostel, Jørpeland, ☎ 97-165551, www.preikestolhytta.no, $-$$. This is the starting point for hikes up to the famous Preikestolen, in beautiful surroundings with great views. It's a little more expensive than most hostels but it's also popular, so remember to book in advance. You can choose rooms with two beds, four beds or the dormitory. A bed in the dorm room goes for 225 kr/$33 but, if there are two of you, you're better off taking a double room for 595 kr/$30 (prices include breakfast). The hostel opens in mid-May and closes in September.

Places to Eat

Sjøhuset Skagen, Skagenveien 16, Stavanger, ☎ 51-895180, $$$. Good fish restaurant in downtown Stavanger, which also has many other types of food to choose from on the menu.

Café Arkaden, Klubbgaten 5, Stavanger, ☎ 51-933055, $. Light meals are available at this reasonably priced café in the center of Stavanger.

Hordaland

Introduction

Hordaland is often the first county in the Fjord Country that people come to since many travel from Oslo to Bergen, the city known as "the gateway to the fjords" and the biggest city in Hordaland. Hordaland has much to offer, from the city pulse of **Bergen** to the mountain village of **Voss**, which is the center for outdoor activities in this county. **Hardanger** is another beautiful area, which is on one of the tourist roads between Oslo and Bergen.

Getting There & Getting Around

❖ By Plane

The **Bergen International Airport**, ☎ 22-942000, in Flesland, about 20 km (12 miles) south of the city, has connections with London, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Helsinki and Amsterdam. Domestically, you can fly from many airports in southern Norway with **SAS**, **Braathens** and **Widerøe**. **Norwegian Airlines** flies from Oslo and Trondheim.

At the airport, there are several car rental companies that also have offices in the city.

Car Rental

- **Avis**, ☎ 55-553955.
- **Hertz**, ☎ 55-964070.
- **Budget**, ☎ 55-227527.

Taxi

Bergen Taxi, ☎ 07000 or 55-997010, www.bergentaxi.no.

❖ By Train & Bus

The train station in Bergen is only a 10-minute walk from the downtown area. There are daily connections with Oslo, which is seven hours away. **Nor-Way Bussekspress**, the national bus company, takes you to and from most cities in the country. Surprisingly, there is no train connection between Bergen and Trondheim, the second- and third-biggest cities in Norway; the trip takes 14 hours by bus. There is also a line called

Lavprisekspressen (the low price express), which operates between Bergen and Oslo and offers prices as low as 49 kr/$72. Lavprisekspressen, ☎ 67-116990, www.lavprisekspressen.no.

❖ By Boat

The Bergen Harbor has boat connections with Newcastle in England and Hanstholm in northern Denmark a couple of times per week year-round through **Fjord Line**. In the summer, there are also routes from Scotland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands once a week with **Smyril Line** and **P&O Scottish Ferries**.

For excursions to the county of Sogn and Fjordane, use **Fylkesbaatane** and for Stavanger in Rogaland take the **Hsd Ferries.** Both depart from the Strandkaiterminalen just past the fish market in Bergen.

Another boat trip is the famous **Hurtigruten** between Bergen and Kirkenes, which you can read more about under *Excursions from Bergen*, page 322.

- **Fjord Line**, ☎ 81-533500, www.fjordline.com.
- **P&O Scottish Ferries**, www.poscottishferries.com.
- **Fylkesbaatane**, ☎ 55-907070, www.fylkesbaatane.no.
- **HSD**, ☎ 55-238780, www.hsd.no.

Voss

It's no wonder Voss is so popular, situated as it is in the mountains between the Hardangerfjord and the Sognefjord. This is one of the prime spots for outdoor adventures in Norway with skiing in the winter and rafting, climbing, kayaking and much more in the summer. Voss is also easy to get to since it's one of the stations on the Bergen Railway line between Bergen and Oslo. From Bergen it's only one hour by train and from Oslo the trip takes around seven hours.

Sightseeing

The American football coaching legend Knut Rockne was born in Voss and there's a memorial in his honor near the railway station. **Vangskyrkja** is an old stone church from the 13th century in the town center. It's open daily in the summer for visi-

Vangskyrkja

tors. Voss also has several museums such as the **Folk Museum**, which is composed of three different museums on the hillside overlooking the city. It's open all year and admission is 40 kr (free for children). The **Dagestad Museum**, displaying wooden carvings and decorations by a well known artist named Magnus Dagestad, is only open in the summer; admission is 30 kr (free for children).

If you drive 35 km (21 miles) north of Voss, to Stalheim on the E16, you will get to one of the steepest roads in Norway, called **Stalhemskleiva**. It has several hairpin turns from which you'll have spectacular views, especially of the two waterfalls on either side of the road. (This trip to Stalheim is included in the "Norway in a Nutshell" tour, which you can learn more about below.)

Voss Tourist Office, ☎ 56-520800, www.visitvoss.no, is on Uttrågata in the town center. It's open all year, but only on weekdays in the winter.

❖ Organized Tours

Norway in a Nutshell is a combined train, bus and boat trip that includes some of the best sightseeing in western Norway. Start your journey in Oslo, Bergen or Voss and take the railway to Myrdal. From Myrdal, the **Flåm Railway**, one of the most famous train rides in Norway, leads you down to the Flåm Valley (more about this ride under *Adventures on Wheels* in *Sogn and Fjordane*, page 329). Continue your journey on the Aurlandfjord and into the **Nærøyfjord**, the narrowest fjord in Norway, which eventually ends up in the village of **Gudvangen**. From Gudvangen a bus takes you up the hairpin curves to **Stalheim**, where it makes a brief stop to let you enjoy the views before continuing on to Voss. Those who start and end their trip in Bergen or Oslo will continue from Voss by train to their final destination.

Round-trips from Bergen are 760 kr/$112, from Voss, 490 kr/$72, from Oslo via Voss, 1,515 kr/$223, from Oslo via Bergen, 1,745 kr/$257. For more information and bookings, ☎ 81-568222, www.fjord-tours.com.

> **Tip:** For accommodations along this tour, check out **www.fjordpass.no**.

Adventures in Voss

Nordic Ventures is a company by the Park Hotel in Voss, offering every kind of adventure you can think of. ☎ 56-510017 or 95-208036, www.nordicventures.com.

❖ On Water

Kayaking

The Nærøyfjord, a branch of the Sognefjord, just north of Voss, is one of the best places to kayak in Norway. The beauty and tranquility combine for the perfect tour. Choose a guided tour or rent a kayak for some paddling on your own.

A guided day-tour (9 am-6 pm) costs 890 kr/$130, including equipment, meals and transportation to and from the Nærøyfjord.

Rafting

Voss is one of the best places for whitewater rafting in Norway. The trip is between 3 and 5 on the international rafting scale (6 is the toughest), although an easier ride (2-3) for families with children is also offered. Included in all tours, besides the bus ride to the starting point, are safety instructions and a swim test.

Price for the easier trip is 450 kr/$86 per person or 1,600 kr/$235 per family. The longer and wilder tour costs 700 kr/$103 per person (750 kr on Saturdays). **Voss Rafting**, ☎ 56-510525, www.vossrafting.no.

❖ In the Air

Parasailing & Paragliding

Parasailing, where you are pulled by a boat while hanging from a parachute, is available between May and October. Daily trips are from 9 am to 11 pm (Sundays from 12 am to 8 pm). The price is 450 kr or 800 kr for a tandem (two people). Paragliding is quite

similar to parasailing, but with the latter you normally start from the ground and get much higher up in the air. It's offered year-round, weather permitting. The price is 1,000 kr/$147 for a tandem flight with an instructor.

For more information and bookings, ☎ 56-510017, www.parasailingvoss.com, www.paraliding-voss.com.

Places to Stay

Stalheim Hotel, Stalheim, ☎ 56-520122, www.stalheim.com, $$$-$$$$. On the E16 north of Voss, this is a popular Norway in a Nutshell tour stop, offering some incredible views. There is also a folk museum on the premises with 24 old farm buildings and an exhibition hall. The hotel is only open from early May to mid-September since the Stalheimskleiva road is closed the rest of the year. The hotel is of the highest quality and quite expensive but if you only want a B&B plan, prices are reasonable.

Hotel Jarl, Elvegata, Voss, ☎ 56-519901, www.jarlvoss.no, $$$. Near the city center of Voss, this hotel has a high standard and is relatively inexpensive. There is free parking for guests, a swimming pool, a restaurant and a pub on the premises.

Voss Sommarhotell, Voss, ☎ 56-514842, $$$. Nice hotel in picturesque environment with great views, just a short drive west of the city. The hotel also offers courses in history, outdoor life, music, photography, handicrafts and applied arts.

Voss Camping, Voss, ☎ 56-511597, www.vosscamping.no, $. The campground is only five minutes from the city center. Cabins are equipped with a cooker and fridge and can take up to five persons. Price per cabin is only 400 kr/$63.

Hardanger

Hardanger is just east of Bergen on the way to Oslo. You get there by taking RV 7, which is the shortest route between Bergen and Oslo and the one used before the highway was built to the north of Hardanger. The highway is longer, has more tunnels but is also faster than RV 7, which is now only a tourist route for visitors to the Hardanger area.

Eidfjord

Eidfjord is one of the regions in Hardanger and is easily accessible since it's right on the road, RV 7, between Bergen and Oslo, 150 km (90 miles) from Bergen. Eidfjord is also the

name of the biggest village in the area. The well-known **Måbø Valley** and the waterfall **Vøringfossen** are just east of it. **Eidfjord Tourist Office**, Riksvegen 27, ☎ 53-673400, www.eidfjordinfo.com.

Despite its proximity to Bergen, the area was virtually unknown to the general public before the 19th century. Prior to that, mainly scientists and explorers came here, but that would all change with the visit of a professor from Oslo named Christopher Hansteen. Hansteen came here in 1821 primarily to make astronomical observations, but he also wanted to make sure that the beauty of the Hardanger region was appreciated by everyone.

Hansteen became known as the discoverer of the giant waterfall **Vøringfossen**. Although he certainly wasn't the first man to visit the falls, he probably was the first to measure its height by dropping stones from the top of the falls and timing how long it took for them to reach the bottom.

Norway is known for its countless waterfalls, many of which can be seen from the roads while driving around, particularly in the fjord region. At 182 m (600 feet), Vøringfossen is not the highest waterfall in Norway but it is one of the most spectacular and it inspired Hansteen to write an article in a famous magazine encouraging everyone to come to Eidfjord and see it. Today, it's by far the most visited waterfall in Norway.

Adventures

❖ On Wheels

The Troll Train

As the Måbø Valley area became more popular with tourists, traffic jams were created here every summer. In 1986 when the new road through a tunnel in the valley was finally inaugurated, the traffic problems were solved and cars were banned from the old road. Many people thought this was a shame since the old road was much more scenic, so a compromise was reached and a sightseeing tour called the Troll Train was introduced in 1992.

The train is not a real train on a railway but has tires like a car. Nevertheless, it became the perfect solution for visitors to enjoy the Måbø Valley and its sights, with Vøringfossen as the highlight.

The Troll Train runs in the summer starting in early June and throughout August. There are two stations: one at the Måbø Valley Museum and the other by the Vøringsfossen cafeteria.

A round-trip ticket costs 60 kr/$94; a one-way ticket is 45 kr.

❖ On Foot

Hiking

Hardangervidda is Europe's largest mountain plateau and a popular area for hiking. The tourist office at Eidfjord is a good starting place for your adventures in this area. The staff can provide you with maps, tips on routes and other advice for your excursions. Along the marked trails of Hardangervidda are lodges, some manned and others self-service. If you plan to stay out for more than a day, you should book accommodation for these lodges at the tourist office before heading out. Remember that you'll need your own sleeping bags for the self-service lodges.

For shorter hikes in the Eidfjord region, one of the best paths is the one leading down to the bottom of the grand waterfall **Vøringfossen**. Note that this stretch is not one of the easier hikes you can find and requires a good bit of concentration as well as good walking shoes. After you've parked the car near the Måbø Tunnel, the walk takes about 1½ hours to the bottom and back.

Places to Stay

Fossli Hotel, Vøringsfossen, ☎ 53-665777, $$$. About 30 minutes from Eidfjord, the hotel has an incredible view of the Måbø Valley.

Eidfjord Hyttegrend, Eidfjord, ☎ 53-665340, $-$$. Situated in Erdal by the Hardangerfjord about five km (three miles) from Eidfjord, the huts are equipped with kitchen, living room, fireplace and TV.

Bergen

Introduction

Bergen, the second biggest city in Norway with 230,000 inhabitants, is on the west coast, surrounded by seven mountains and seven fjords. Tourism in Bergen is big, understandably, since it's one of the most beautiful cities in Norway. In addition, it has a vast number of restaurants, hotels and attractions. The city is known as the gateway to the fjords and is the perfect starting place for your adventures in the fjord region of western Norway. Bergen is also the start of the famous **Hurtigruten**, the boat trip stretching all the way up to Kirkenes near the Russian border. Although Bergen is by the sea, it is "protected" by the island of Askøy to the west, which means it's not as windy as you might expect from a city on the west coast. However, neither Askøy, nor anything else, can protect Bergen from precipitation. And it does rain a lot here – about 270 days a year, for a combined 2,000 mm (80 inches). That's more than three times the amount Oslo gets. Bergen rarely gets any snow, however, since the winters here are mild, thanks to the Gulf Stream.

Brief History

Bergen was founded nearly 1,000 years ago and became the capital of Norway in the 13th century. During the Middle Ages, the city developed into a crucial trading port for the German Hanseatic League. Although the town was founded by the Norwegian king Olav Kyrre, it was the Germans who put Bergen on the world map and rightfully gave the city its name, which means "the mountains." The history of the city is still evident today with the old wharf, Bryggen, where the Germans set up one of their four most important trading stations in northern Europe. In 1702, Bryggen suffered from a fire but was rebuilt four years later and is today on UNESCO's world heritage list.

Bergen was the capital of Norway until 1299, when Oslo took over, but the city would continue to grow, still thriving from the trading business. In the year 1600, it was the most populous city in Scandinavia with 15,000 people. Over the next

couple of centuries, the population stagnated and, by 1890, it was overtaken by the current capital Oslo. Like many Norwegian cities, Bergen was severely damaged during World War II. After the war, when the it was rebuilt, a lot of suburbs sprung up around the city, which significantly increased the population.

Practical Information

❖ Tourist Information

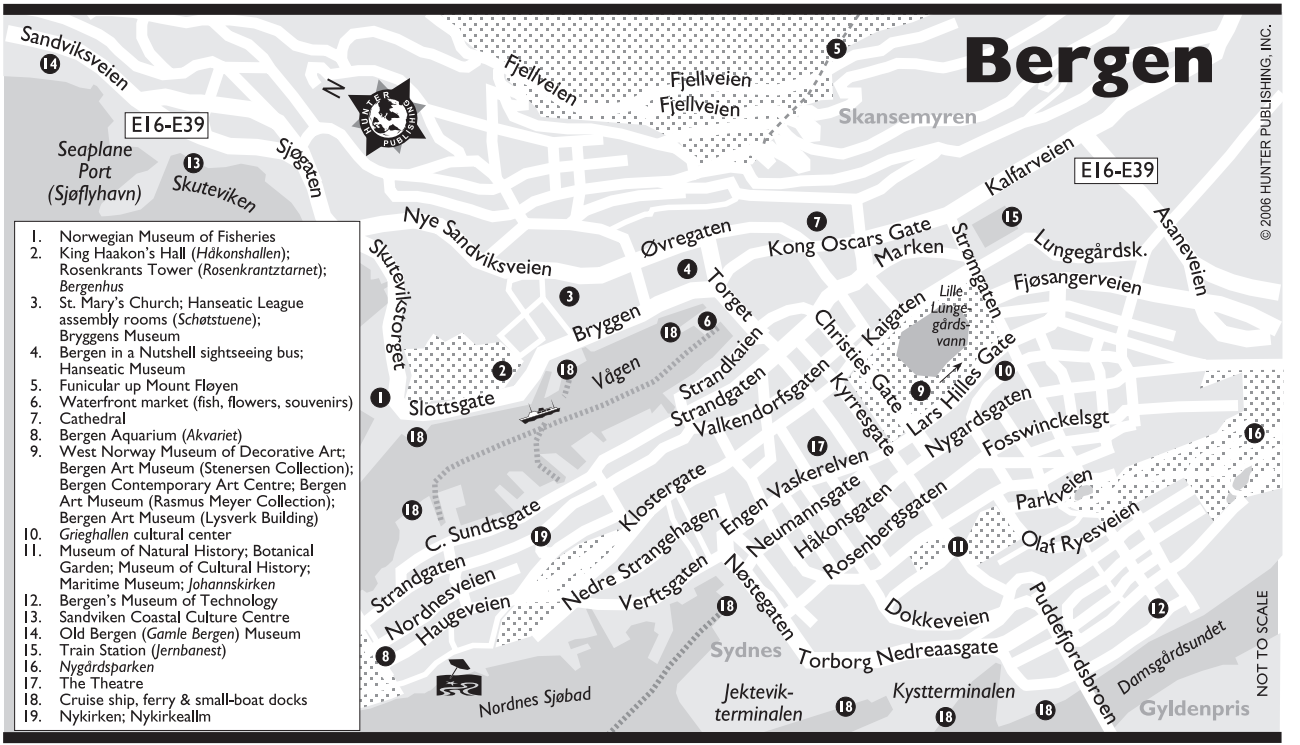
The tourist office is at Vågsallmenning Square, ☎ 55552000, www.visitbergen.com, which is right next to the fish market. As Bergen is the gateway to the fjords, you can get all kinds of information here about the surrounding areas. The staff can also help you book accommodation, rent cars or buy train tickets.

THE BERGEN CARD

This card is worth purchasing if you are in town for at least one full day and plan to visit several attractions or take a few guided tours. The card costs 165 kr/$26 for 24 hours and 245 kr/$38 for 48 hours; it gives you free entrance to most attractions and discounted prices to the guided tours.

Sightseeing in Bergen

Bergen has a compact city center set up well for pedestrians and it's best explored on foot. From the train station you have about a 10-minute walk to the city center where you will find **Torgalmenningen Square**. It leads down to **Torget** and the fish market, where the tourist office is located. Between the city center and the train station is a big park, where the **Bergen Art Museum** is located. The **Grieg Hall**, which is mostly used as a congress center, is right next to it and on the other side of the park is the **city hall** with the **cathedral** a few blocks farther down. For shopping in Bergen, you should visit the other side of Torgalmenningen (toward the harbor)


Bergen
1. Norwegian Museum of Fisheries
2. King Haakon's Hall (Håkonshallen); Rosenkrants Tower (Rosenkrantztarnet); Bergenhus
3. St. Mary's Church; Hanseatic League assembly rooms (Schøtstuene); Bryggens Museum
4. Bergen in a Nutshell sightseeing bus; Hanseatic Museum
5. Funicular up Mount Fløyen
6. Waterfront market (fish, flowers, souvenirs)
7. Cathedral
8. Bergen Aquarium (Akvariet)
9. West Norway Museum of Decorative Art; Bergen Art Museum (Stenersen Collection); Bergen Contemporary Art Centre; Bergen Art Museum (Rasmus Meyer Collection); Bergen Art Museum (Lysverk Building)
10. Grieghallen cultural center
11. Museum of Natural History; Botanical Garden; Museum of Cultural History; Maritime Museum; Johannskirken
12. Bergen's Museum of Technology
13. Sandviken Coastal Culture Centre
14. Old Bergen (Gamle Bergen) Museum
15. Train Station (Jernbanest)
16. Nygårdsparken
17. The Theatre
18. Cruise ship, ferry & small-boat docks
19. Nykirken; Nykirkeallm
Sandviksveien
E16-E39
Seaplane Port (Sjøflyhavn)
Skuteviken
Sjøgaten
Fjellveien
Fjellveien
Fjellveien
Skansemyren
Kalfarveien
E16-E39
Asaneveien
Lungegårdsk.
Fjøsangerveien
Strømgaten
Marken
Kong Oscars Gate
Nye Sandviksveien
Skutevikstorget
Øvregaten
Torget
Bryggen
Vågen
Strandkaien
Strandgaten
Valkendorfsgaten
Christies Gate
Kaigaten
Lille Lungegårds-vann
Kyrresgate
Lars Hilles Gate
Slottsgate
Nygardsgaten
Fosswinckelsgt
Engen
Vaskerelven
Neumannsgate
Håkonsgaten
Rosenbergsgaten
Parkveien
Olaf Ryesveien
Klostergate
C. Sundtsgate
Strandgaten
Nordnesveien
Haugeveien
Nedre Strangehagen
Verftsgaten
Nøstegaten
Dokkeveien
Puddefjordsbroen
Damsgårdsundet
Sydnes
Torborg Nedreaasgate
Nordnes Sjøbad
Jektevik-terminalen
Kystterminalen
Gyldenpris
NOT TO SCALE
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where **Strandgaten** is one of the best streets, with lots of good shops.

Sandviken is one of the best areas in the city and is just a few minutes walk from the harbor. **Gamle Bergen** (Old Bergen) is an open-air museum a couple of km north of Sandviken, with reconstructed houses (all but one is original) to make it look as Bergen did in the 18th and 19th centuries. You should definitely try to take a guided tour of this area to learn more about the history of the city. A good idea is to take one of the guided bus tours that includes Gamle Bergen, since it's a little out of walking range from the city center (see *Bus Tours* below).

Bergen has plenty of other good museums. Besides the two at Bryggen (see *The Harbor* below) there's the **Norwegian Museum of Fisheries**, which is a 10-minute walk past Bryggen if you keep going along the harbor. The Norwegian west coast is well known for its fishing industry and you'll learn everything you need to know and more at this place.

❖ The Harbor

The harbor in Bergen is quite large and has always been of great importance to the city and the country at large. The inner part, known as Vågen, ends where the fish market is located. The harbor has brought a lot of business to the city over the years but it also brought diseases such as the plague, killing 70% of the population in the Middle Ages. A few generations ago, there were so many boats in the harbor that you could walk across it from one end to the other. Today, the boats are mainly going to and from Sognefjorden and Stavanger, but there are quite a few cruise liners as well. An estimated 230 cruise ships visit Bergen every year.

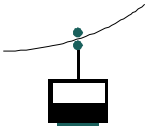
One of the best walks in the city is the one at **Bryggen**, with the old wooden houses at the wharf lined up looking over the harbor. These houses, originally built during the Hanseatic era, are not quite as old as they look. A fire in 1702 destroyed all of them, but they were rebuilt soon after. The oldest house on Bryggen is the **Hanseatic Museum**, which is well worth a visit. There are also guided tours of Bryggen several times a day that start at Meeting Point Bryggen, which is in the same building as another museum, the **Bryggen Museum**. This is the best starting point for a tour of the old Hanseatic district

and its attractions, whether you take the guided tour or choose to explore on your own.

❖ The Fish Market

Bergen has the largest open-air fish market in Norway and it's at the end of the harbor, which is also where the tourist office is located. The market is open every day of the year except Sundays from September to May and, in addition to fish, offers fresh fruit, vegetables, flowers, handicrafts and souvenirs. The fish market is always buzzing with people and is a great place to stop and get a bite to eat as well.

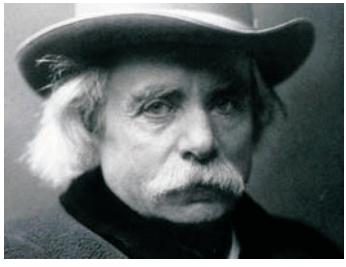
❖ Bergen from Above



You should definitely not miss the opportunity to see Bergen from above and there are plenty of opportunities, with seven surrounding mountains. The most popular way is to take the **Fløybanen funicular**, which runs every day from early morning until late night year-round. It's downtown just a five-minute walk from the fish market and it takes only seven minutes to get to the top of **Mount Fløyen**, where you will have a fantastic view of the entire Bergen area. Fløybanen is the most visited attraction in Bergen.

Another option is the **cableway** to the top of **Mount Ulriken**, the highest mountain in Bergen. This trip is best accessed in combination with the Bergen in a Nutshell tour, which includes a guided bus tour in the city (read more about it below).

❖ Troldhaugen



Troldhaugen was the home of world-famous composer **Edvard Grieg** who lived in Bergen most of his life. The house is today one of the biggest attractions in Bergen, although it wasn't even in Bergen at the beginning; the house hasn't moved but, in Grieg's days, Bergen was just a small town and Troldhaugen's location in southern Bergen was considered the countryside. Grieg was born in 1843 and built Troldhaugen in 1885, where he lived for the next 22 years before passing away at age 64. His home is interesting

to visit but even more impressive is the concert hall, **Troldsalen**, a beautiful building just around the corner. Built in 1985, Troldsalen hosts concerts three times per week and every day during festival weeks.

You can visit Troldhaugen as part of the guided bus tour (see *Guided Tours* above) or take the public bus from the bus station in Bergen to Hop, which takes about 15 minutes. From there, you will need to walk 20 minutes, following the signs for Troldhaugen.

For more information, ☎ 55-922992, www.troldhaugen.com.

❖ The Aquarium

The Bergen Aquarium is one of the biggest in Europe and definitely the best to visit in Scandinavia. At the tip of the peninsula on the south side of the inner harbor, it opened in 1960 and over 200,000 people visit every year to watch the seals, penguins, snakes and numerous kinds of fish. There are three outdoor pools along with 70 indoor tanks; enough to keep you busy for a whole day.

The museum is open year-round from 9 am-7 pm in the summer and 10 am-6 pm the rest of the year. Admission is 100 kr/$157 for adults and 50 kr for children, ☎ 55-557171.

❖ Bergen Fjord Sightseeing

This is a four-hour boat ride that gives you a good taste of the fjord region. The boat departs from the pier by the fish market and takes you north of the city into Osterfjorden and around Osterøy, the largest inland island in Europe. On this journey you will pass many interesting sights such as a bridge where the water is so deep (600 m/2,000 feet) that the pillars have to float on the water instead of being connected to the bottom. Many other interesting curiosities and anecdotes are imparted by the guide on this journey, ☎ 55-259000.

❖ Guided Tours

Tip: Summer is definitely the best time to visit Bergen as most guided tours are only available then and they are well worth doing. Tickets can be purchased in advance at the tourist office or, if spaces are available, where the tours start.

Bergen Guide Service, ☎ 55-301060, www.bergenguide-service.no, offers two different tours of the city on foot. One is called "the unknown Bergen" and the other "Bergen yesterday and today." The first is normally offered every Saturday at 3 pm and the second on Sundays at 3 pm, both in English. For other times or languages, contact the Bergen Guide Service office and make other arrangements, which shouldn't be a problem, especially if you have a big group. Each tour takes about two hours and costs 80 kr/$125 per person.

Bergen Guided Tours, ☎ 55-554454, is a guided bus tour of the city that includes a visit to Troldhaugen (See *Adventures on Foot*, page 319). There are two daily departures; the one leaving at 10 am also includes a trip to Old Bergen and its museum, while the afternoon trip, departing at 2 pm, takes you to Fantoft Stavkirke, the beautiful old church. Regardless of which tour you go on, Troldhaugen and a tour of the city are included in both. The guides are knowledgeable and speak many languages. You will learn a lot about Bergen in this three-hour tour. The price for adults is 250 kr/$39 (160 kr for children).

Bergen in a Nutshell

This is a tour that starts off with a bus ride from the city center. The double-decker offers earphones enabling you to choose from eight different languages for the trip up to the base of Mount Ulriken, the highest mountain in Bergen. The cableway then transports you up to the top where you have an incredible view of the city. At the top of Mount Ulriken there is also a restaurant and café that offers concerts five times daily for free.

Events

May 17, **Constitution Day**; the parade is not as big as in Oslo, but the celebrations are just as intense.

Festspillene (Bergen International Festival) is one of the biggest festivals in Bergen, taking place annually for 10 days at the end of May and beginning of June. Find out more by visiting www.festspillene.no, or ☎ 55-210630.

The annual **Seafood for Everybody** fair is organized by the Norwegian Seafood Center at the SAS Radisson Hotel on the Bryggen wharf during the second week in May. During this event, you can learn more about the delicacies of the sea and get a chance to try some samples too. Seafood for Everybody, Bontelabo 2, Bergen, ☎ 55-554880.

Places to Stay

Strand Hotel, Strandkaien 2-4, ☎ 55-593300, www.strandhotel.no, $$$. First-class hotel by the Fish Market. All rooms are equipped with pay-TV and Internet access.

Nygård Apartment, Nygårsgaten 31, ☎ 55-327253, $$. Apartment hotel in the downtown area with single rooms from 365 kr/$57 and double rooms from 265 kr/$42 per person.

Places to Eat

Enhjørningen, Bryggen, ☎ 55-327919, $$$. This is Bergen's only fish restaurant and they have an extensive à la carte menu with every type of fish and shellfish you could think of. It's on Bryggen, the famous wharf.

Wesselstuen, Ole Bulls Plass 6, ☎ 55-554949, $$-$$$. Cozy restaurant with good food and nice atmosphere in downtown Bergen near the theater and music hall.

Kafe Kippers, Georgernes Verft 12, Bergen, ☎ 55310060, $$. This place, about a 10-minute walk from the fish market, has an open-air café in the summer with a great ocean view.

Excursions from Bergen

❖ Hurtigruten

Hurtigruten, the Norwegian Coastal Voyage, goes from Bergen to Kirkenes, through fjords, past glaciers, around islands – with some of the most dramatic scenery you will ever encounter.

History of Hurtigruten

Connections with Bergen and northern Norway have existed for centuries, long before the Hurtigruten opened in the late 19th century. The people in northern Norway came down with their dried fish (tørrfisk) and traded it for goods such as salt,

sugar, flour and other items they needed, which they couldn't get where they lived. Considering the limited transportation options in those days, boat travel was the natural choice – the fjords and mountains made trekking over land difficult and time-consuming. Boats could also transport far more goods.

The word Hurtigruten comes from the Norwegian words *hurtig* (fast, quick) and *ruten* (the route). Hurtigruten is the name of the voyage and also of the ferry boat company that operates the boats.

Today, times are a bit different and Hurtigruten is not primarily a form of transportation, but a scenic sightseeing tour. A boat departs the Bergen Harbor every day year-round; a round-trip to Kirkenes and back takes 11 days and passes thorough 35 ports. If you feel that an 11-day trip is too much, a one-way trip from Bergen to Kirkenes takes six days. You can take a car onboard, then drive it from Kirkenes back down the coast or wherever else you'd rather go. You can also travel shorter distances on the Hurtigruten and by doing so you might actually end up saving time as opposed to other means of transportation. Going from one port to the next on the Coastal Voyage could well be faster than taking the bus or car and remember that there are no train connections along the coast north of Bodø.

Before the trip: The route is designed so that the boats will be protected by islands as much as possible to provide the most comfortable journey. Sometimes, however, especially in the northern sections, the boats have to cross the open sea. Since the Hurtigruten boats will travel year-round and even in windy conditions from time to time, you might want to prepare yourself; pills for motion sickness are available onboard.

As far as prices are concerned, the first thing to mention is that Hurtigruten is not cheap. There are many variables that

determine the price, such as which boat you choose (there are 12), what time of the year, how long the route is (round-trip, one-way or just a few ports), which type of cabin, etc. The best thing to do is to contact Hurtigruten by phone or log on to the website and request a price. ☎ 81-030000, www.hurtigruten.com.

Sogn & Fjordane

Introduction

For those seeking the pulse of a big city, don't bother coming to Sogn and Fjordane, where the biggest town is Florø, with 10,000 inhabitants. This county, which stretches from Geiranger in the north to the Voss area in the south, has some of the most fascinating natural sights Norway can offer. Take for example the **Sognefjord**, the longest and deepest of all the fjords in the world; or **Jostedalsbreen**, the biggest glacier in mainland Europe. You will also find here the highest mountain in Scandinavia, **Mount Galdhøpiggen**, 2,400 m (7,200 feet) above sea level.

Getting Here & Getting Around

One of the best ways of getting to Sogn and Fjordane from Bergen is undoubtedly the ferry company **Fylkesbaatane**, the boat trips that take you into the grand Sognefjord. Train is another option and the best way of getting here from Oslo. Take the **Bergen Railway** to Myrdal, accessed from both Bergen and Oslo, and then to Flåm from Myrdal on the famous **Flåm Railway** (more about this under *Adventures on Wheels*). From Flåm you can then go by **ferry** to the Kaupanger/Sogndal area with Fylkesbaatane. Sogndal also has an airport but, unless you are in a hurry to get here, I would recommend trains or boats, which combine transportation with great sightseeing. If you are driving, the trip from Oslo will take about seven hours; from Bergen, you should allow five hours. Fylkesbaatane, ☎ 55-907070.

The Jostedalsbreen Glacier

The biggest glacier in mainland Europe, Jostedalsbreen, is today popular for recreational purposes and easily accessible through guided tours. There was a time, however, when the

glacier had to be crossed by people transporting their cattle from the Sognefjord area to Nordfjord or vice versa. That was no small feat considering the huge size of the glacier. Jostedalsbreen has, like most other glaciers, several branches (also known as tongues or arms), of which 22 carry individual names. Some of the best known branches are Nigardsbreen, Austdalsbreen and Bergsetbreen.

Jostedalsbreen can be accessed both from the north and the south. There are tourist information centers in Skei, Byrkjelo, Olden, Stryn and Sandane, on the Nordfjord in the north, and Balestrand, Sogndal, Hafslo, Gaupne and Skjolden, on the Sognefjord, south of Jostedalsbreen. You can stop by any of these to pick up a road map of the area.

Two of the best places to visit at Jostedalsbreen are Jostedalen and Fjærland, which are both accessed from the south. Both also have tourist information centers.

Jostedalen, north of Gaupne, is where you access the **Nigardsbreen Glacier**, which is probably the best-known and most popular branch of the Jostedalsbreen. More than 30,000 tourists visit Nigardsbreen every year; considering the relatively small area people occupy between the village of Jostedal and the glacier, it can get pretty crowded with tourists here during peak season (July-August).

From Sogndal, there are several buses leaving daily for Jostedalen via Hafslo and Gaupne. The trip up is as much of a sightseeing trip as it is transportation, with the grand glacier on the left, the high peaks of the Jotunheimen Mountains to your right and the turquoise water of the Jostedal River running alongside the road.

Tip: A car can be an advantage for getting around the area, especially if you visit in peak season and you can get away from the most crowded areas. But keep in mind that you sometimes have to pay tolls to pass through the tunnels, and some are quite expensive. Buses run frequently in the summer between most places in the Jostedalsbreen area and are not expensive.

Just north of Fjærland, you will find the **Bremuseum**, ☎ 57-693288, www.bre.museum.no. The museum is well worth a visit if you're interested in facts about glaciers and

fjords. You can also see the fantastic panoramic film showing Jostedalsbreen. The museum is open daily April-October, 10 am-4 pm (during peak season, June-August, 9 am-7 pm).

FACTS ABOUT GLACIERS

During the latest Ice Age, about 30% of the earth's land area was covered with ice. Although the climate would gradually get warmer and the ice would retreat about 10,000 years ago in most parts of the world, it remained in areas such as the Polar regions. Eventually, the climate got colder again and in some high-elevation areas, where the snow that falls in the winter exceeds the amount that melts in the summer, glaciers slowly developed.

Most glaciers in the world are found in Greenland and Antarctica. Mountain regions at high elevation where snow remains year-round also contain glaciers. When enough snow is accumulated it will transform into ice and, for each passing year that snow accumulates on the glacier, the ice becomes more compact and the density increases.

Flåm

Flåm is mostly known for its famous railway, but also for the natural surroundings, with some of the best areas for outdoor activities such as hiking and biking. It's in a valley at the end of the Aurlandsfjord, which is a branch of the grand Sognefjord. Since 1992, the main road between Oslo and Bergen (the E16) has been going through the Flåm area, which obviously hasn't hurt the town's popularity. Myrdal, near Flåm, is one of the stations on the Bergen Railway line, the line between Oslo and Bergen.

Sightseeing

❖ Borgund Stave Church

Borgund is not the oldest nor the biggest stave church in Norway; those honors belong to Urnes and Heddal respectively, but it's the most distinctive because it is so well preserved. Borgund was

built around the year 1150 and has most of its original parts still intact.

The church can be found along the E16 Highway east of Lærdal by the end of the Sognefjord. You can get there from the Flåm area either by taking the car-ferry from Gudvangen or taking the Aurland Road, aka the Snow Road, which is only open in the summer. Otherwise, the world's longest road-tunnel, the **Lærdal Tunnel** (24.5 km/14.7 miles long) is at your disposal. The Borgund Stave Church is open May-September.

STAVE CHURCHES

Church at Borgund

Stave churches were built in the 10th-12th centuries when missionaries came to the country and most Norwegians converted to the Christian faith. They are built completely of wood with an impressive design. The word stave means pole or post and these were the essential elements in constructing the churches. In most buildings from those days, the walls were made up of poles placed horizontally. Stave poles, on the other hand, were placed vertically, one in each corner. The poles would then function as the foundation and planks were placed on the sides, connected to each other with grooves from top to bottom. This system is what gave the stave churches their unique architecture and made it possible to build them much higher than conventional churches.

Most emphasis was put on the exterior; most of the wall paintings you'll see inside were not made until the later Middle Ages.

In the year 1200, there were about 1,000 stave churches in the country. Many of them burned down over the years, while others were torn down deliberately and replaced by more modern churches. Today, there are only about 30 left in Norway. Some of the most famous include the one in Heddal in the county of Telemark, sometimes referred to as "the cathedral of stave churches." Fantoft Stave Church, just outside Bergen, burned down in 1992, but was rebuilt; it is the most visited in Norway, not surprisingly, considering there are bus tours departing daily from the city. Borgund, near Sognefjord (see separate section), is characterized by the dragon sculptures on the sides. The oldest remaining stave church in Norway is Urnes, dating to c. 1130, which is on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Urnes north portal, 11th c.

Adventures

❖ On Foot

Hiking the Glacier

Fjærland is one of the central towns in the glacier area. This is an excellent starting place for a tour of the glacier, whether you are here for sightseeing or a hiking trip. From here, you probably have the easiest access to Jostedalsbreen, where branches of the glacier reach as far down as 60 m (200 feet) above sea level. Fjærland can be reached from Balestrand on the Sognefjord by ferry or from Sogndal by bus. There is also a connection from Skein in the north.

Guided Tours

Regardless of where you choose to hike, it is important that you have a guide with you. You can either take a private guide or join a group.

Jostedalen Breførarlag offers guided tours on Nigardsbreen near Jostedal. There are several different tours available and this area is also good for families with children. ☎ 57-683250.

Bre & Fjell offer guided tours on the Flatbreen Glacier, accessed from Fjærland. Tours are offered July 2-August 10 and cost 450 kr/$70 per person, with discounts possible for groups and families. This hike is a little tougher than the one on Nigardsbreen and has a minimum age requirement of 15. ☎ 57-693233, www.breogfjell.no.

❖ On Water

Tour the Sognefjord

The Sognefjord is not only the longest and deepest fjord in the world, it was also the one that became the first popular tourist destination in the fjord region. If traveling from Bergen, the ferry company **Fylkesbaatane** is one of your best bets for reaching the Sognefjord by boat. When cruising into the fjord from the sea you will get a sense of its huge size. As you get farther and farther in, the fjord narrows and the mountains get steeper and higher (or they just seem to be because the fjord gets narrower). The trip from Bergen to Flåm, where you can continue your journey with the Flåm Railway, takes about 5½ hours.

Contact one of the following companies for more information and to book tours in the Sognefjord area.

- **Fylkesbaatane**, ☎ 55-907070, www.fylkesbaatane.no.
- **Fjords of Scandinavia**, www.fjordsofscandinavia.com.
- **Fjord Tours**, ☎ 81-568222, www.fjordtours.no.
- **The Fjords**, Florø, ☎ 57-757000, www.thefjords.no.

❖ On Wheels

The Flåm Railway

Of all the scenic train rides in Norway, the Flåm Railway has to be considered at the top of the list. Construction of the railway started in 1920 when it was decided that the Bergen Railway line, linking Oslo and Bergen, needed a complement to transport passengers to the increasingly popular fjords. The trip from Myrdal, one of the stations of the Bergen Railway line up in the mountains, to Flåm down in the valley is only 20 km (12

miles), but the Flåm Railway would not be an easy task to complete. Because of the rapid change of elevation, 865 m (2,500 feet) from top to bottom, the route had to be constructed in a circuitous fashion and 20 tunnels had to be created to accomplish this feat. The fact that all but two of those tunnels were completed manually didn't exactly speed up the process. The tunnels add up to 5.7 km (3.4 miles), which is nearly 30% of the total length. It would take the workers up to a month to cut through just three feet of the tunnel in the early years. (If you want to find out everything about the engineering skills and work required in making the Flåm Railway, visit the Flåm Railway Museum in Flåm.) In the first years after the Flåm Railway opened in 1940, it was primarily used for transportation of goods. Today, it is one of the most popular train rides in Scandinavia with over 400,000 passengers annually and that is its sole function now.

The Flåm Railway can be experienced year-round and you can travel in either direction or take a round-trip. Single trips cost 150 kr/$17 (children 75 kr) and round-trips 250 kr/$39 (150 kr). Reservations are not required except for groups of 10 and more.

Despite its length of only 20 km (12 miles), the trip takes longer than you might expect. Surprisingly it takes longer to go downhill than uphill; it's a 40-minute trip from Flåm down to Myrdal, but from Myrdal up to Flåm the trip takes 53 minutes. This is because it's too risky to go any faster on the steep hills down towards the valley.

❖ Biking

Rallarvegen (the Navvies' Trail), is unique and spectacular in many ways and by far the most famous biking route in Norway. As the name indicates, it is the old railway built over 100 years ago that has inspired this track (the workers who built the railway were known as Navvies). The trail can be either easy or difficult depending on which direction you choose to go.

The **Rallarvegen Trail** runs from Haugastøl to Flåm, for a total distance of 80 km (50 miles) and the easier option is

going west, in other words starting at Haugastøl and ending up in Flåm. The starting point is 1,000 m (3,000 feet) above sea level, while your destination is only two m (six feet) above sea level. The first 11 km (six miles) are open for motor vehicles, but the remaining 69 km (41 miles) are open only to bikers and hikers.

Finse is an optional starting point, which is 23 km (14 miles) west of Haugastøl. The highest railway station in Norway is here and you will also find a **DNT (Norwegian Mountain Touring Association) Finsehytta Hostel** for accommodation, along with the interesting **Navvies' Museum**. The last stretch is all downhill and the final 20 km (12 miles) before Flåm, where the elevation will drop 865 m (2,600 feet) in your descent to the Flåm Valley, is where it really gets tricky. Although the scenery here is breathtaking, you have to pay close attention to the frequent sharp hairpin turns.

If this route does not satisfy your needs, there are an additional 43 km (28 miles) west of the Gravhal Tunnel near Myrdal that lead to Voss. The total distance between Haugastøl at the top and Voss is 108 km (65 miles).

For more information about Rallarvegen, ☎ 32-095900.

Bike Rental

The demand for bikes in peak season is high but **Rallarvegen Bike Rental**, ☎ 95-270466, is your best bet if you have not booked in advance, since they have the biggest supply of bikes. The price for two days in mid-week is 390 kr/$61 and for a weekend, 490 kr/$77. If you want to rent a bike for just a day or a few hours, contact the office for rates (but from Finse, there is a two-day minimum). You can pick up your bike at either Haugastøl or Finse and return it at any of the three destinations, Flåm, Voss or Myrdal (without any extra charges for shipping).

❖ On Snow

Summer Skiing

Who said skiing is a winter sport? The **Strynefjellet Resort** opens in late May and closes in August. It's one of the best places in northern Europe for summer skiing. **Stryn village** is near the Nordfjord at the northwest corner of the

Jostedalsbreen Glacier. From there, connections run to Strynefjellet by bus departing daily from the Stryn town center in the mornings. Stryn is an old tourist village, although the first tourist came here primarily for fishing and not skiing.

The last stretch between Stryn and Strynefjellet, **Road 258 (Gamla Strynefjellsveien)**, is a classic sightseeing route. Built over 100 years ago, it used to be the only link between east and west in this region; today it's a tourist attraction in itself but, like many scenic roads in Norway, it's only open in the summer.

If there is one bad thing about skiing at Strynefjellet it is that the weather is unpredictable; if the sun is shining, however, it's probably the best place for summer skiing in Norway. **Galdhøpiggen Ski Center** is also popular and has a longer season than Stryn thanks to the higher elevation. The disadvantage with Galdhøpiggen is that there is only one slope and it's both shorter and shallower than the slopes in Stryn.

A one-day ski lift ticket at Strynefjellet costs 280 kr/$44 (200 kr for children). ☎ 57-875474, www.strynefjellet.com.

Places to Stay

Fretheim Hotel, Flåm, ☎ 57-636300, $$$. The hotel has been around for over 100 years and was established by a man named Christen Fretheim when many foreigners started coming to this area in the late 19th century to fish for salmon. There are 112 spacious, bright and comfortable rooms and seven suites. The hotel also features a bar and restaurant.

Strynsvatn Camping and Vacation Center, Stryn, ☎ 57-877543, $-$$. This campsite is at Lake Strynsvatnet just east of the village of Stryn, close to activities such as summer skiing and glacier walking. There is a wide selection of cabins to choose from and spaces to rent for RVs as well.

Møre & Romsdal

Introduction

In the northern section of the western fjord region of Norway is the county of Møre and Romsdal. The three main cities here are **Ålesund**, **Molde** and **Kristiansund**, all by the sea. The most famous fjord in the county is **Geirangerfjord**, which is

one of the best-known and most popular in Norway. There are over 6,000 islands along the coast but you don't have to go far inland to find high mountains and some of the most impressive sights in Norway, many of which can be seen from the roads.

Getting Here & Getting Around

❖ By Plane

Ålesund, **Molde** and **Kristiansund** all have airports with connections to the bigger cities in Norway (Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim) through **SAS/Braathens**.

❖ By Train & Bus

Dombås is a railway junction east of Møre and Romsdal where trains between Oslo and Trondheim stop. From Dombås to the three coastal cities you take the ***Raumabanen Railway*** line (see *Sightseeing*) to Åndalsnes and continue by bus.

❖ By Boat

Møre and Romsdal Fylkesbåtar, ☎ 71-219501, the ferry company, runs boats for cruising around in the fjords. All three coastal cities are good starting points for these excursions.

Ålesund

Ålesund is the biggest city in the county, with 35,000 inhabitants, and it has a unique setting on seven small islands. The best view of the city is found at the nearby mountain **Aksla** and anyone who visits the city should walk (or drive) up to see the city from above. The history of Ålesund can be divided into two parts, before and after the fire; most of the city burned to the ground in 1904 and had to be rebuilt. The architects who created the new city gave it a unique style which is, apart from its location on small islands, what makes it so special. Although tourism is big in Ålesund today, fishing remains a major part of the economy.

Molde

Molde is a bit farther up the coast from Ålesund and is the second-biggest city in Møre and Romsdal, with 24,000 inhab-

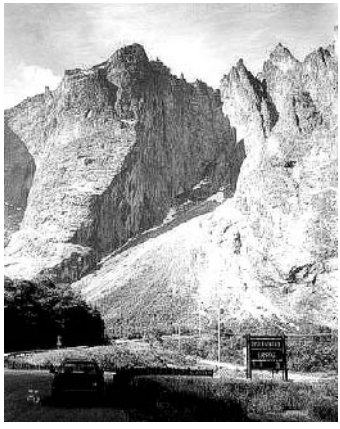
itants. There are good reasons to visit Molde as well, although it's not quite as scenic as Ålesund. The city center is modern since many buildings were destroyed during the Second World War and had to be rebuilt. Molde is known as "the city of roses" and the roof of the city hall is covered with these flowers. The cathedral is also worth visiting in Molde but the one thing most people probably associate with the city more than anything is the **Jazz Festival** that takes place here every summer in August.

Sightseeing

❖ Trollstigen

Of all the scenic roads in Norway, the **Golden Route**, which you find between Åndalsnes and the Geirangerfjord, is one of the best. One section of this route is Trollstigen, near the town of Åndalsnes, about a one-hour drive from Molde. This is one of the most thrilling drives anywhere in Norway.

If you are the driver in the car, keep your eyes on the road through all 11 turns of Trollstigen, which winds its way up the mountain **Stigrøra**, and wait to enjoy the view until you get to the viewpoint at the top (unless you are coming in from the opposite direction, in which case you start at the top). In addition to the view, there's a restaurant and a museum where you can see photos and tools used for constructing Trollstigen, which was inaugurated in 1933 by King Haakon VII. Keep in mind before coming here that Trollstigen is, for safety reasons, closed during the winter and usually opens sometime in mid- or late May, depending on the weather.



❖ Trollveggen

Trollveggen (The Troll Wall), just outside of Åndalsnes, is the highest vertical mountain wall in Europe at 1,000 m (3,000 feet) and the total length from the valley to the top is nearly twice that distance. "The wall" is one of the biggest attractions in the area; most people come for the

views, but there are others with more adventurous agendas in mind.

Climbing is understandably a popular activity here but also demanding, even if you are not climbing the vertical section. Trollryggen is the longest climbing route in Europe (4,000 m/12,000 feet) and it was climbed for the first time in 1958. The vertical wall, Trollveggen, was not conquered by climbers until seven years later when two teams, one Norwegian and one English, spent two weeks in their quest for the top. There are some easier routes available in the area as well; a visit to the Åndalsnes Tourist Office is highly recommended as a start.

Åndalsnes Tourist Office, ☎ 71-221622, www.visit-andalsnes.com.

BASE jumping (which stands for Building, Antenna, Span and Earth) can be described as skydiving from a fixed object (such as the four included in the name) and has been a popular sport for many years. Many would consider Trollveggen a BASE jumper's paradise, while others will tell you it's a kamikaze zone. The first BASE jump here was done in 1980 and, since then, an estimated 400 jumpers have followed, some successfully and others not. BASE jumping is today illegal in most countries but it's still allowed in many places in Norway (Kjerag in Rogaland for example). In 1986, however, a decision was made making BASE jumping illegal from Trollveggen, partly because of the risky conditions but also because of how difficult and costly it is for rescue crews to access the area.

❖ Raumabanen

Raumabanen is a stretch of railway 114 km (68 miles) long from Dombås in the neighboring county of Oppland to Åndalsnes in Romsdal. It is one of the most scenic train rides in Norway and takes you through the famous attractions in the area such as **Trollveggen** in Romsdal. The journey runs

year-round and takes about an hour and 20 minutes. The best place to start is in Dombås then heading west to Åndalsnes. The first stretch is just a warm-up but once you get past Bjørli, at about the halfway point, the ride takes you into a new dimension with some really spectacular scenery. The area around **Verma** is the real highlight of the trip with tunnels, bridges, waterfalls and incredible views of snow-covered mountains even in the summertime. In one of the tunnels, the train makes a U-turn and exits just below where it entered the mountain. This kind of engineering was necessary when designing the tracks in this hilly terrain and gives passengers a feeling of riding a rollercoaster more than a regular train ride. **Vermafossen Waterfall**, with an 850-m (2,550-foot) drop, and the **Kylling Bridge** are two of the sights to look forward to on this trip. The Kylling Bridge is a beautiful stone bridge, one of the best-looking railway bridges you will find, especially at night when it's lit up. The best view of it is not from the train, however, but from the road outside the town of Verma.

Places to Stay

Hareid Hotel, Hareid, ☎ 70-092411, $$$. This hotel is in beautiful surroundings about 35 km (21 miles) south of Ålesund. Single and double rooms are available at affordable prices. You can get here from Ålesund by taking the ferry from the harbor.

HOTEL PRICES NORWAY	
For double room including taxes. For hostels with no double rooms, price is per bed in dormitory.	
$	Under 300 kr ($47)
$$	300-600 kr ($48-$96)
$$$	601-1,200 kr ($97-$182)
$$$$	Over 1,200 kr ($182+)

Neptun Hotel, Tomrefjord, ☎ 71-188600, $$-$$$, www.neptunhotel.no, in the heart of Møre and Romsdal. Great starting point for your adventures in the county. All rooms have private bathrooms, TV and telephone.

Trollstigen Camping, Åndalsnes, ☎ 71-221112, www.trollstigen.no, $$. Situated at the foot of the Trollstigen road with great views over the valley. There are rooms, cabins and apartments available. You will also find a café/restaurant and souvenir shop here.

■ Trondelag

Introduction

Trøndelag is divided into two counties, North and South Trøndelag, which today are among the most important agricultural counties in Norway. Trondheim in South Trøndelag is the biggest city in the region and the third-biggest in Norway. Trøndelag is often recognized as "central Norway" although it is much farther south than the geographical center of Norway.

The people of Trøndelag sometimes, half-jokingly, claim that if you take the pages about their counties out of the history books, you would only be left with the covers. Although this is an exaggeration, there is no question that this region had the most impact on the history of Norway for several hundred years at the start of the previous millennium.

Getting Here & Getting Around

By Plane

Værnes Airport just east of Trondheim has connections with Stockholm, Copenhagen and most cities in Norway with **SAS** and **Braathens**. The airline **Widerøe** connects Trondheim with most cities in the north of Norway. There are both bus and train transfers from the airport to downtown Trondheim and both cost around 50 kr/$8.

By Boat

A **Hurtigruten** boat enters the harbor of Trondheim every morning and leaves at noon heading north; another boat headed in the opposite direction arrives at 10. The nearest ports from Trondheim on the Hurtigruten route are Rørvik to the north and Kristiansund to the south.

From Trondheim you can also take boats over to Fosen, the peninsula north of the city, which is a great area for outdoor adventures. Boats depart from the Pilterminalen Quay in Trondheim to Vanvikan on the Fosen Peninsula. For those taking their car, there are car-ferries from Flak, just west of

Trondheim, to Rørvik on Fosen (not to be confused with the Rørvik on the Hurtigruten route, which is much farther up the coast). From Pilterminalen you can also travel to other places on Fosen and the surrounding islands by the coast.

Kystekspressen is a ferry route operating between Kristiansund and Trondheim, which stops in Brekestad farther out on the Fosen Peninsula and the popular island of Hitra a bit farther down the coast. Kystekspressen, ☎ 73-890700, www.kystekspressen.no.

By Bus & Train

There are several daily trains from Oslo to Trondheim. The trip takes about seven hours and there are several departures per day. If traveling from the province of Jämtland in Sweden, you can take **Nabotåget**, the train route between Östersund and Trondheim. The trip costs 300 kr/$47 and takes about four hours.

There are no trains from Bergen but **Nor-Way Bussekspress** operates instead with a couple of trips per day, which take 14 hours. If traveling north, Fauske is nine hours by train and an additional hour to Bodø where train traffic terminates.

❖ By Car

The **E6 Highway** runs through the city and goes past the airport on the way up north to Stiklestad and Steinkjer where you can either keep going north on the highway or take the more scenic, but longer and more expensive, **RV 17** along the coast (more about this route in the Nordland section). When driving on E6 east of Trondheim, there's a toll of 25 kr/$4 in both directions. When you enter the city by car there is another toll of 15 kr/$2.35 between 6 am and 6 pm. If you have already paid the highway toll, however, you don't have to pay the city toll. Just remember to save the ticket.

Car Rental Companies

Budget has an office at the airport, ☎ 74-822800, and one in Trondheim at Kjøpmansgatan, ☎ 73-526920, www.budget.no.

Hertz, ☎ 74-801620 (airport) and 73-503500 for the downtown office at Innherredsveien 103, www.hertz.no.

Rent-A-Wreck, Bratsbergvgaten 15, ☎ 73-952080, www.rent-a-wreck.no.

Trondheim

Introduction

Trondheim is on a peninsula, surrounded by the Trondheimfjord and the Nidelva River, in the middle of the Trøndelag counties. The area is technically not a part of the fjord region, which is farther south, yet the **Trondheimfjord** is the third-longest fjord in Norway (after the Sognefjord and the Hardangerfjord) and there are many more reasons for Trondheim's popularity. Trondheim is one of the oldest existing cities in Scandinavia. The city has a quite young population, mostly attributed to the popular university founded in 1968.

Brief History

One of the main things that make the city so special is its history. The city was founded in 997 by King Olav Tryggvason where a little village named Kaupangr was located. As the town grew, the name changed to Nidaros after the river Nidelva running through it. At the time, neither Oslo nor Bergen existed yet and Nidaros became the capital and central town for trading in the country. Nidaros remained the capital of Norway until 1217, when Bergen took over. The influence of the Hanseatic League in Bergen was too strong and Nidaros consequently lost much of its significance as a commercial port.

The name Nidaros remained, however, and didn't change to Trondhjem (spelled differently in those days) until the 16th century. The name was changed back to Nidaros in 1930 but the people opposed it so strongly that it was eventually renamed Trondheim, although this time with the contemporary spelling.

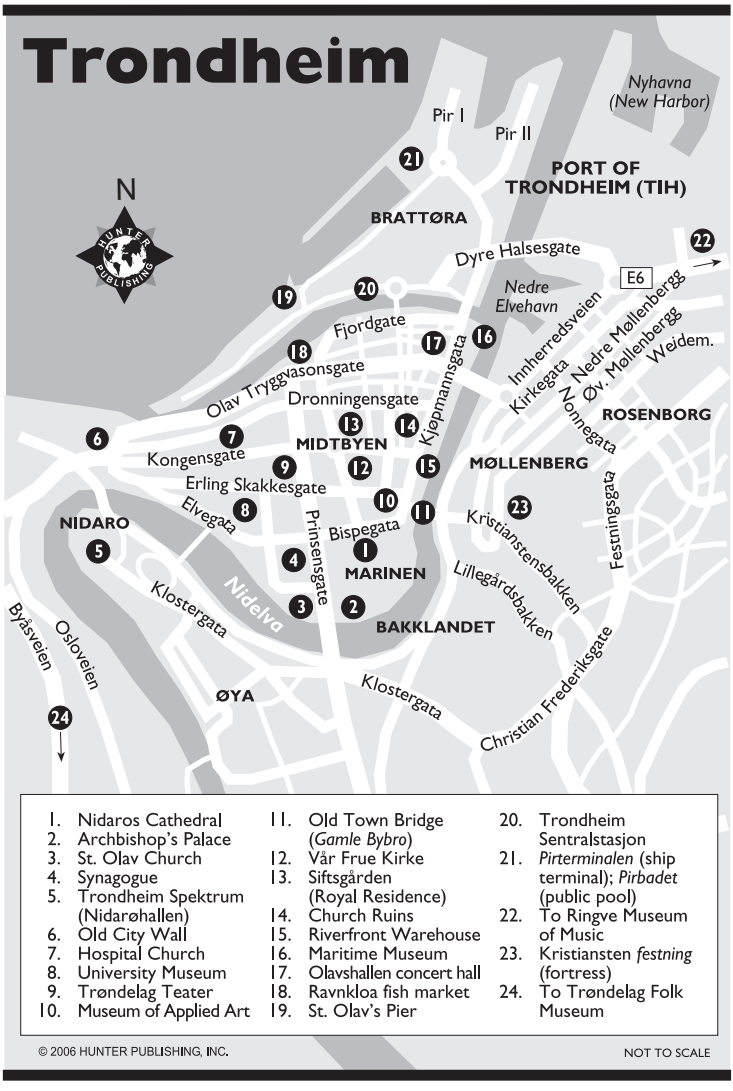
ST OLAV

Olav Haraldsson

Olav Haraldsson was born and lived during the Viking Age, an era that would end soon after his death. As the Viking Age was coming to an end, the kings had become more powerful and Olav Haraldsson, who succeeded Olav Tryggvason, played a major role in introducing Christianity to Norwegians although he had to pay for his boldness with his life. Olav was privileged enough to be able to travel around in Europe in his youth. Christianity was gaining in popularity all over Europe, but Scandinavians were still convinced that believing in the Viking Gods was the right faith.

Although Olav Haraldsson was forced to abdicate and flee from Norway he wouldn't give up and returned to fight for his cause. Eventually, he was defeated and killed in the Battle of Stiklestad, about 100 km (60 miles) north of Trondheim, in 1030. This was the beginning of the end of the Viking era and Olav, who was canonized shortly after his death, would become known as St Olav.

When his body was found, it was buried near the river Nidelva just south of where the city of Nidaros was located. On this spot, sometime in the late 11th century, construction of the Nidaros Cathedral commenced, probably by order of Olav Haraldsson's nephew, Olav Kyrre. Soon after, Nidaros became a destination for thousands of pilgrims and, as the legend of St Olav grew, so did the number of pilgrims. Thousands of people still hike to Trondheim from as far as Oslo and western Sweden, although these days it's more for recreational purposes than for religion.



Sightseeing

Trondheim is a big city by Norwegian standards but you can easily walk from the train station by the north end of town to the cathedral at the south end in 15 minutes. The nice thing about walking around in downtown Trondheim is that there's an

interesting mix of old and new buildings. The city is one of the oldest in Scandinavia and fortunately did not suffer from bombings during World War II, as opposed to most cities along the west coast. It has however suffered from many fires over the years, especially in the 19th century. Some parts had to be rebuilt, while others have been spared, which is why you get this mixture of old and new architecture that makes Trondheim special. Most parts of the city center look modern and the area along the river in the northern section toward the harbor is charming. This is also where many of the best restaurants are, which naturally draws a lot of people at night.

The **Ravnkloa Square**, where you find the fish market, is a popular meeting place during the day, partly because it's a delightful area and also since many of the popular boat tours depart from there.

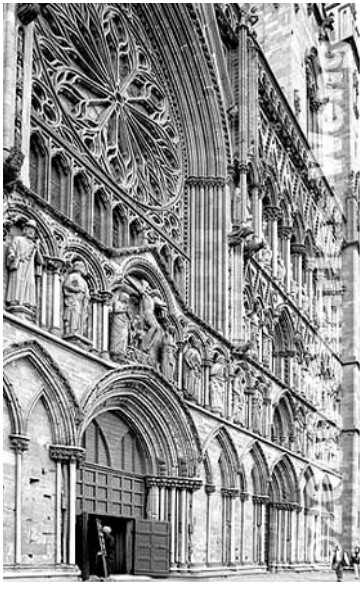
The large square, **Torget**, with the impressive statue of the city's founder, is a natural meeting place and also where you'll find the **Tourist Information Center**. Not far from here is one of the city's other major landmarks, **Stiftsgården**, which is the largest wooden palace in Scandinavia. It was built in the late 18th century and is still home to the royal family when they visit Trondheim. There are guided tours of Stiftsgården every hour on the hour in the high-season.

To find the real jewel of the city you'll have to cross the river Nidelva over to a part of town known as **Bakklandet**, an old working-class area with charming wooden buildings. You can get there by taking the Bakke Bridge from the north end of town, but the best way is to enter from the south, for example after visiting the cathedral, and walk across the bridge called **Gamle Bybro**. While standing on this old wooden bridge you will get one of the best views in the whole city, looking down the river toward the harbor, with **Bryggene**, the old fishing storehouses, on your left.

The harbor itself, near the train station, is also well worth a tour. The legacy of **Leif Eriksson** is commemorated here with a statue looking out over the fjord. Eriksson was a Viking who supposedly left this harbor about 1,000 years ago, sailed west across the Atlantic Ocean and disembarked at a place he named Vinland in

present-day Newfoundland. It is quite possible that Eriksson discovered America 500 years before Columbus. At the harbor you will also find the **Monument of Emigration**. This monument, which was a gift from the United States when Trondheim celebrated its millennium, displays the names of 1,000 people who followed in the footsteps of Eriksson and emigrated west.

The Nidaros Cathedral



The grand Nidaros Cathedral at the south end of town is by far the most famous landmark in Trondheim and the most visited attraction. The cathedral is 100 m (300 feet) long, 50 m (150 feet) wide with a ceiling 21 m (60 feet) high and is the biggest building from the Middle Ages in Scandinavia. Kings and queens are traditionally still crowned here, even though it's almost 800 years since Trondheim was the capital of Norway.

As opposed to many famous attractions, the cathedral is not an overrated tourist attraction and is worth every minute and krone spent. Besides, admission is only 40 kr/$6.30 and that includes a guided tour offered in several languages several times per day, as well as entrance to the adjacent Archbishop's Palace. If you're only in town for a day and feel you have time to do just one thing, your decision should be an easy one.

Once you have paid the entrance fee, the first thing you should do is to check the times for the guided tours. If there is one starting shortly in the language you prefer, you might as well wait for it; if not, walk inside and look around for yourself. Among the things to see and do inside Nidaros is walking up in the tower; you'll get a great view of Trondheim after climbing the narrow spiral staircase to the top. This has to be organized by the staff because the staircase is so narrow. It's

not for the claustrophobic and, unless you're the last one to enter, there is no chance of turning back.

> **Remember:** No cameras are allowed in the cathedral.

Kristiansten Fortress

One of the most significant landmarks in Trondheim is the Kristiansten Fortress, on a hill in the southeastern section of town with a magnificent view. The fortress was built in the 1680s by General Cicignon, who was also in charge of rebuilding Trondheim after a disastrous fire in 1681 that ruined large parts of the city. With its elevated location looking out over the town and surrounding area, it was the ideal place to guard and protect Trondheim from enemies. In 1718 when the Swedish army tried to conquer Norway, Kristiansten Fortress played a crucial role in defending the city as well as the country.

The Swedish king, Karl XII, had created a vast empire and sent one of his generals, Carl Gustaf Armfelt, across the border from the Swedish province Jämtland, just east of Trondheim, while the king himself entered the country from the south. Although the Norwegian troops were largely outnumbered in Trondheim, Armfelt and his men had to retreat. You can learn all about this battle, along with other interesting facts, at the fortress, although the majority of people who come here probably do it more for the view of the city and the fjord. **Kristiansten Fortress**, ☎ 73-995280.

Munkholmen

The island of Munkholmen (the Monk's Island) is just north of Trondheim and is a popular place to visit. In the early 11th century, one of the first monasteries in Scandinavia was built here by some Benedictine monks, which is how the island got its name. The building turned into a prison in 1658 and has also functioned as a house for customs. Munkholmen is believed to have been Trondheim's execution ground in ancient times. Today, the main reason people come here is for the beach and the historical sights. There is also a good restaurant.

Boats to Munkholmen depart from Ravnkloa, the square by the fish market, every hour on the hour, daily in the summer, and take 10 minutes. A round-trip ticket costs 48 kr/$7.50 and for an extra 25 kr you get a guided tour of the island as well.

Practical Information

The tourist office is at the main square, Torget, right in the middle of the city, where the statue of St Olav stands. ☎ 73-807660. Apart from comprehensive information about Trondheim, you can find many brochures and maps of other parts of Norway here as well.

Guided Tours

❖ By Bus

Every day at 12 noon, a guided tour starts from outside the McDonald's by the main square, across from the tourist office. The two-hour tour takes you past all of Trondheim's main sights and costs 180 kr/$28 (75 kr for children under 16). You can buy tickets at the tourist office or directly from the guide.

❖ By Boat

This 1½-hour trip takes you along the Nidelva River, through the canal and into the Trondheimfjord for some great views of the city. Tours depart from the Ravnkloa Pier every day except Mondays between June 20 and August 15 at 2 pm and cost 120 kr/$19 (50 kr for children under 15). Additional dates and times of departure could be offered; check with the tourist office for details. Tickets are sold on the boats or at the tourist office.

Adventures

❖ On Water

Kayaking

Trondheim is an ideal city for kayaking. A good starting place is the canal at the north end of town between the train station and downtown Trondheim. **Sportsbua** on Fjordgata 36, ☎ 73-808940, has canoe and kayak rentals and the staff will gladly provide you with suggested routes in the area. Venturing along Nidelva, the river running through the city is a popular alternative. Others head out to the Trondheimfjord.

At Sportsbua you can rent a kayak for 250 kr/$39 a day as long as it's picked up and returned when the store is open. Opening hours are 10 am-5 pm Monday-Friday, but it has to be returned half an hour before closing (4:30). Another option

is to rent for 24 hours, which costs 300 kr/$47, or rent for the weekend at 700 kr/$109, or an entire week for 1,000 kr/$157.

If you want to go a little farther inland, there's a place about 20 minutes from downtown Trondheim along Nidelva in a village named Klæbu where you can rent a canoe for 190 kr/$33 per day and paddle in an area surrounded by forests and mountains. Contact **Nidelven Opplevelser**, ☎ 92-626786.

Fjord Rafting

If you feel the need for speed, a Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB) with a top speed of 67 knots (78 miles/hour) should fulfill your desires. The raft is custom-made in England and was driven to Trondheim across the North Sea by its owner. Most tours are in the Trondheimfjord and to one of the islands or peninsulas along the coast. There are also some longer tours out to the open sea among the oil rigs. The tours generally last between one and two hours and cost around 1,000 kr/$157 per person; groups of six persons or more can get considerable discounts.

Traveling at such high speeds in the open sea may seem dangerous and, according to two employees in a Trondheim sports shop, the raft once turned over and all 12 passengers fell off. None of the passengers were hurt supposedly and the RIB is still undoubtedly much safer than driving a car on the E6 Highway. **Fjord Rafting**, Sunnlandsveien 37, Trondheim, ☎ 73-933122 or 92-436828.

❖ On Wheels

Biking

Biking is an increasingly popular activity in Trondheim and the surrounding areas. Norway is a hilly country and not always the most bike-friendly, but the Trøndelag region is an exception, especially near the coast. There are many places outside the city that are well suited for biking – Fosen for example, the peninsula just north of Trondheim, or the island of Hitra farther out by the coast (See *Getting Here* and *Getting Around by Boat*).

Within the city limits of Trondheim, people have been encouraged by city officials over the last years to get around on bikes more to improve traffic and benefit the environment. The peculiar bike-lift in Bakklandet near the bridge Gamle Bybro was introduced with the intention of increasing the number of

bikers in town. Built in 1993, it was the first bike-lift in the world and is possibly the only one of its kind even today. The lift takes you up the steep hill from Bakklandet toward the Kristiansten Fortress. You remain seated on your bike while one foot is placed on the lift, which is started by using a key card, available at the tourist office by the main square or at the café Dromedar Kaffebar by the lift.

Events

The city of Trondheim arranges many activities and events during the year, partly to lure more tourists to town, but also for its residents.

❖ St Olav Festival

This festival, which is held in honor of St Olav, started in 1962 and is the biggest church and culture festival in Norway. It takes place every year at the end of July and beginning of August. Most events during the week are held outside the Nidaros Cathedral. The most important day of the week is July 29th, the day Olav Haraldsson died in the battle at Stiklestad in 1030. To commemorate this day there's a vigil on the night between the 28th and the 29th that starts with a service in the cathedral. In addition, there are concerts (both indoor and outdoor), lectures, exhibitions, and many other activities for both adults and children. Tickets can be booked at ☎ 81-533133 or www.billettservice.no.

❖ Stiklestad

Stiklestad, north of Trondheim at the end of the Trondheimfjord, was the scene of the famous battle in 1030. Although almost 1,000 years have passed, Stiklestad arguably remains the most famous battlefield in Norwegian history. For the past 50 years, plays have been held here in honor of King Olav's fight for Christianity. The performances take place the last week of July every year. If you can't visit at this particular time, Stiklestad is still worth a stop, especially if you are heading north from Trondheim. Guided tours include the museum and the open-air theater, the oldest and biggest of its kind in Scandinavia, where the plays are held. More than 300 people participate in the play every year.

Places to Stay

There isn't much difference in price between the hotels in downtown Trondheim. Most range between 700 kr/$110 and 1,000 kr/$157 for a double room.

HOTEL PRICES NORWAY	
For double room including taxes. For hostels with no double rooms, price is per bed in dormitory.	
$	Under 300 kr ($47)
$$	300-600 kr ($48-$96)
$$$	601-1,200 kr ($97-$182)
$$$$	Over 1,200 kr ($182+)

Quality Hotel Augustin, Kongensgate 26, Trondheim, ☎ 73-547000, $$$. This hotel is close to Torvet, the main square and, with its spacious rooms, is well suited for families with children.

Scandic Hotel Residence, Torvet, Trondheim, ☎ 73-528380, www.scandic-hotels.com, $$$. A modern business hotel, located right in the center of downtown Trondheim, with 66 comfortable rooms. All rooms have wireless Internet connection. Includes a café, bar and restaurant.

Lilletorget Hotel, Cicignons Plass, Trondheim, ☎ 73-806300, $$$. Charming little hotel in the central part of downtown Trondheim with 44 rooms, all equipped with private bathrooms and cable TV.

Singsaker Sommerhotell, Rogertsgate 1, Trondheim, ☎ 73-893100, $$-$$$. About a 10-minute walk from the city center, this is a particularly good value if you want a single room. It's near the old sections of town across the Gamle Bybro Bridge.

Places to Eat

Ravnkloa, ☎ 73-525521, is not just the name of the square in the north end of town but also the restaurant and market hall next to it. This is the best place in Trondheim to go for seafood but they have other alternatives as well. If you prefer meat or vegetarian, there's

RESTAURANT PRICES NORWAY	
For one main course & a beverage, including taxes.	
$	Less than 100 kr ($15)
$$	100-200 kr ($15-$30)
$$$	201-300 kr ($30-$44)
$$$$	Over 300 kr ($44+)

a wide selection to choose from. The food here is not cheap but there are always special offers for lunch. Try the salmon burger with chili and garlic.

Even if you're not that hungry, you can enjoy a coffee at the open-air café, with a view of the fjord. For only 25 kr/$3.90 you can get a coffee and a waffle with jam and whipped cream.

Big Horn, Munkegata 41, Trondheim, ☎ 73-509490, $$$. At this steakhouse you'll really get your money's worth if you're hungry.

Dickens, Kjøpmanngata 57, ☎ 73-515750, $$-$$$. In one of the old timber warehouses along the Nidelva River, this restaurant has a pleasant, cozy atmosphere and great variety on the menu.

Excursions in South Trøndelag

Røros

Røros, 150 km (90 miles) south of Trondheim, received national attention in 1644 when copper was discovered by a local farmer named Hans Aasen. When Aasen was out hunting one day he found a shiny rock, which he showed to a friend of his, a German copper works manager named Lorentz Lossius. Lossius confirmed that it was indeed copper Aasen had found and mining started outside Røros later that year. Today, the whole city of Røros with its old timber houses is like an open-air museum and the only building made of stone in the entire town is the church, which was the only building left after the fire in 1678. The legacy has also put the old mining town on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Getting to Røros by car takes 2½ hours from Trondheim and, if you're coming from Oslo, about 4½ hours. There are also connections by train and bus several times daily from both Trondheim and Oslo. Røros even has an airport with flights six days a week from Oslo with **Widerøe**, which is the only commercial airline available.

Røros Tourist Office, Peder Hiorts gate, ☎ 72-411165, www.rorosinfo.com.

> **Warning!** If you visit Røros, do it in the summer. It can be one of the coldest places in the country during the winter with a record temperature of -50°C (-58°F).

Activities in & around Røros

Guided tours of downtown Røros in English start at the tourist office and are only offered in the summer, starting at 1 pm Monday-Saturday and 2 pm on Sundays. The guide takes you through the two main streets, Kjerkgata and Bergmannsgata, with their old wooden houses. The tour ends inside the old church. Tickets cost 50 kr/$7.85 and are purchased at the tourist office.

The **Olav Mine**, about a 10-minute drive from downtown, is a must for all visitors to the Røros area. There are guided tours daily year-round which take you deep into the mine at 50 m (150 feet) below ground level.

There are plenty of opportunities for all kinds of outdoor activities in the area. The tourist office rents out bikes and can put together an organized mountain bike tour package.

Røros Sport, Bergmannsgata 13, ☎ 72-411218, has both bike and canoe rentals. **Heimly Huskies Adventures**, ☎ 72-414793, in Glåmos which is just outside Røros on the road to Trondheim (Road 30), offers bike and canoe rentals.

Oppdal

This town is 120 km southwest of Trondheim, at the corner of the E6 Highway and Road 70. The actual town itself with its 3,500 inhabitants is not the reason to come here, but it's a good starting point for trips to nearby Trollheimen and Dovrefjell.

Dovrefjell is a national park on both sides of the E6 just south of Oppdal on the way to Dombås. The park is divided by the highway with high peaks on the west side and a flatter more lush area on the east side. The east side is also unique in Norway for its herds of muskoxen. Muskoxen were transported to this area from Greenland in the 1930s and the herds have now grown quite big. Muskox safaris in Dovrefjell are offered in the summer and start at the Kongsvold railway station. There is only one tour daily, starting in the morning, which lasts around five to six hours. For bookings, ☎ 72-400800.

Trollheimen, on the border of the county of Møre and Romsdal, is a nature reserve much appreciated by hikers.

From Oppdal you are only a few km from Osen, by Lake Gjevilvatnet, which is the gateway to Trollheimen from Oppdal. From here, you can make your way up along the lake to the cabin called **Gjevilhytta**, either by foot or car. Gjevilhytta is a good starting point for hikers in Trollheimen. An option for those who wish to start farther up, without having to walk there, is to take the boat, *Trollheimen II*, from Osen all the way to Vasseneden at the end of the lake. The boat departs every day at 12 noon, but only in July and early August.

What makes Trollheimen ideal for hiking is the availability of trails and cabins in the area in addition to the lush vegetation and bare mountains. There's a route known as The Triangle which starts at Gjevilhytta and provides perhaps the best scenery in the area, although it's quite demanding as well.

You can acquire a map at the tourist office in Oppdal and ask for suggestions on possible routes and cabins.

Other Activities in & around Oppdal

Opplev Oppdal (experience Oppdal) is a company next to the train station in downtown Oppdal which arranges all kinds of activities such as rafting, climbing, canyoning and guided hiking tours. You can also rent a canoe, either including or excluding a guided tour. Contact Opplev Oppdal at ☎ 72-404180.

The North

■ Nordland

Introduction

Nordland has the longest coastline of all the counties in Norway; the 14,000 km (9,000 miles) is one quarter of the country's total coastline. The coast and the islands are what make this long and narrow county so special. There are 12,000 islands out of which 600 are inhabited by nearly 30% of the total population of Nordland. **Lofoten**, the archipelago with its impressive

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mountains, is probably the most famous group of islands in Norway and one of the favorite destinations among tourists in Nordland. The largest island in Norway (besides Spitsbergen in Svalbard, which technically belongs to Norway) is **Hinnøya**, which links Lofoten to the mainland. There are five main regions in Nordland: Helgeland, Salten, Lofoten, Ofoten and Vesterålen. The two biggest cities in Nordland are Bodø and Narvik.

Getting Here & Getting Around

❖ By Plane

Narvik has a small airport near the town center but most commercial flights depart and arrive at the larger **Harstad/Narvik Airport** which is about a one-hour drive north of Narvik.

❖ By Train

Narvik has a train station but there are no connections with other Norwegian cities, only with northern Sweden. This train route starts in Luleå on the Swedish east coast, passes through Kiruna and switches its name from **Malmbanan** to **Ofotbanen** once it crosses the national border into Norway.

If traveling within Norway, the last train stop is in Bodø for those heading north. Besides Ofotbanen, there are no trains whatsoever north of Bodø in Norway.

❖ By Bus

Buses depart and arrive at the bus terminal in Narvik, outside the bottom floor of the shopping mall across the bridge from the town center. There are daily connections with Fauske in the south, which take five hours. To the north, the buses take you as far up as the North Cape, which is 13 hours away. Tromsø, the biggest city in northern Norway, is 4½ hours from Narvik. You can also take the bus to Lofoten, although taking the boat is both cheaper and quicker, at least to the western parts of the archipelago.

Besides the national bus company, **Nor-Way Bussekspress**, there's a regional company, **Nordtrafikk**, for transportation within Nordland. **Nordtrafikk**, ☎ 76-111111, www.nordtrafikk.no.

❖ By Boat

The **Hurtigruten** coastal voyage from Bergen to Kirkenes, which is described in the Bergen chapter, makes two stops on the Lofoten Islands and is a good way of getting to and away from Nordland by boat. For information on how to get to Lofoten from cities within Nordland, see the section about Lofoten, page 360.

❖ By Car

Having a car is an advantage in northern Norway and there are several places to rent one in Narvik although, if you arrive in the summer, you must book in advance or you have basically no chance of getting one.

Car Rentals in Narvik

- **Avis**, Håreksgate 77, Narvik, ☎ 76-943980.
- **Hertz**, Kongensgate 20, Narvik, ☎ 76-944555.
- **Statoil**, Fagernesveien 142, Narvik, ☎ 76-944180.

Climate

The climate in Nordland is surprisingly mild considering its northern location. Thanks to the Gulf Stream, the summers are warm and winters are mild. The numerous islands protect the coast from strong ocean winds; Narvik is particularly protected, both because of the location at the end of the Ofotfjord and also because it's protected by the high mountains on Lofoten. It rains considerably less in Nordland than the southwestern part of coastal Norway (Bergen and Stavanger). In the winter, Narvik gets its fair share of snow on Mount Fagernes thanks to its high altitude, but the sea outside Nordland is ice-free all year.

Driving Tour

Nordland has quite a few unique sights to offer. The **Coastal Road** (Kystriksveien, officially RV 17) is not the fastest way to get around, especially considering the ferry rides available. But it is definitely more scenic than taking the inland E6 highway which most buses use. If entering Nordland from its southern neighbor Trøndelag, you will make the decision in

Steinkjer, north of Trondheim, whether to take the fast or the scenic route. The Coastal Road will lead you to a place called Brønnøysund, which is in Helgeland. Just south of this town is **Mount Torghatten** which, when you first look at it, seems to have little to offer. The mountain looks like a giant hat and in it there is a hole, 105 feet deep, 480 feet long. The legend tells us about a king who threw his hat to save a princess from an arrow and, right after the arrow went through the hat, it turned into stone. A more reasonable explanation is that it was formed by the Inland Ice more than 10,000 years ago. Climbing up into and through the hole is a popular activity for those who come here. When you head north from Brønnøysund, the Coastal Road will take you through some spectacular scenery, maybe the best of coastal Norway. This trip includes several ferry rides, which make the distance seem much longer than it actually is.

Eventually you will cross the bridge that takes you to the famous **Saltstraumen**. This is the name of the strait that separates the **Saltfjord** and the **Skjerstadfjord**. Every six hours (four times per day) one fjord drains into the other due to the tide, which creates the strongest tide current in the world. You get a good look at this impressive sight from the bridge. From Saltstraumen you are only a short drive from Bodø, the largest city in Nordland, from where you have the option of traveling by boat to Lofoten or continuing the drive north toward Narvik.

Unfortunately the ferries are mandatory if you wish to travel this road. There are six ferries in total and they take two hours combined for a cost of about 300 kr/$47. Keep this in mind if you have a time schedule and a budget.

The Arctic Circle

Mo i Rana is a city you will get to if you take the E6 instead of the Coastal Road when heading north in Nordland. Besides some caves, the city itself is not all that interesting and is mostly known for its iron industry. But there is one thing that makes Mo i Rana a little special and that is the Arctic Circle,

which crosses just north of the city. North of this latitude (66.6 degrees), the sun does not go below the horizon for at least one night of the year and the farther north you go, the longer the sun will stay up (see chart below). In the winter, of course, the opposite applies and the sun will not appear in the sky for at least one whole day and sometimes up to several months, depending on how far north you are. For more information about the midnight sun, see *Sightseeing* in the Lappland chapter, page 268. The chart below shows the days when you can see the midnight sun in northern Norway:

THE MIDNIGHT SUN IN NORTHERN NORWAY	
Bodø	June 3-July 8
Solvær	May 28-July 14
Harstad	May 24-July 18
Tromsø	May 20-July 22
Vardø	May 17-July 25
Hammerfest	May 16-July 26
The North Cape	May 13-July 29

The Grønli Cave

About 25% of caves in Scandinavia are right here in the limestone-rich soil of Nordland. There are more than 200 caves in southern Nordland alone, of which the Grønli Cave in Mo i Rana is by far the most famous. A tourist attraction for the last 100 years, it is the most visited limestone cave in Norway and the only illuminated show cave in Scandinavia.

Guided tours are offered every hour between 10 am and 7 pm in the summer, with spectacular sights, such as an underground waterfall and potholes formed by erosion since the latest Ice Age. A regular tour is about 20 minutes. There are special tours taking you deeper into the cave. You can also visit the **Seter Cave** not far from the Grønli Cave, which is a bit more adventurous.

Bodø

Bodø is the biggest city in Nordland with 40,000 inhabitants and this is also where the railroad ends when traveling north in Norway. Bodø has for many years been the main center of commerce in the region but also an important fishing town. In 1940, the city was completely ruined by German bombings and the only thing left was the 13th-century cathedral. The city is worth visiting and has a couple of interesting museums, although most people only stop here briefly before taking the boat over to Lofoten. Bodø is also widely known for the many sea eagles gliding gracefully across the sky.

Narvik

Narvik is a good place to visit year-round though most visit in the summer when the weather is normally nice. Winter is popular thanks to the skiing opportunities here and many visitors in the fall come for the exciting killer whale safaris. There are many outdoor activities to pursue in the Narvik area and hiking is popular in the summer. What makes hiking particularly good are the short distances between the coast and the mountains, providing the best of both worlds.

Narvik, although a young city, has an interesting history. It was founded in 1902 when a port was needed for exporting all the iron ore from the mine that had opened in Kiruna Sweden a few years earlier. Sweden had its own harbors on the Baltic Coast but Narvik was better suited, partly because of quicker access to other parts of Europe, and since it's an ice-free port year-round thanks to the Gulf Stream.

Narvik is certainly not one of the prettiest cities in Norway. It was rebuilt after suffering greatly from bombings during World War II. Both the Germans and the allied countries realized the importance of the port where iron ore was shipped from the mines in Kiruna.

Sightseeing in Narvik

Narvik is on a little peninsula at the base of the 1,200-m (3,600-foot) **Mount Fagernes** right at the edge of the sea. While the city itself does not have too much to offer, you can get an incredible view by taking the cableway up to the top of the mountain. The cableway starts about a 10-minute walk from downtown Narvik and takes you up to 600 m (1,800 feet) above sea level.

A second lift can take you all the way up to the top and is mostly used by skiers in the winter; the skiing season starts in December and lasts until late May.

The trip up the first lift to the midway point costs 100 kr/$15.70 in the summer. This may sound pretty expensive and if the weather is anything less than great with clear skies and warm temperatures, it's not really worth it. Apart from the view, people come here for activities such as hiking and biking. There's also a good restaurant wedged into the slope.

As for dining and nightlife in downtown Narvik, there is a limited supply of restaurants and, if you're looking for bars and nightclubs, you're better off heading up to Tromsø, a four-hour drive north by car or bus.

Adventures

❖ On Water

Shipwreck Diving

Diving is popular in northern Norway, with spectacular scenery and a reasonably mild climate that provides ice-free conditions even in the winter; but there is one thing in particular that makes diving off the coast of Narvik unique. Narvik has always been an important port and it didn't take the Germans long to realize that during World War II, when the valuable iron ore, transported from the mines in northern Sweden, was much needed. In 1940, battles resulted in an estimated 63 planes and 46 ships ending up at the bottom of the sea just outside Narvik, much to divers' delight today.

Narvik Wreck Diving, ☎ 90721105.

Narvik Dykk & Eventyr, ☎ 99512205, www.narvik-dykaventyr.nu.

Killer Whale Safari

There are two main places for killer whale safaris in Nordland: **Tysfjord**, south of Narvik, where you find the narrowest point between the coast of Norway and Sweden (six km/3.6 miles), and **Andenes** in northern Vesterålen. In Andenes, the season for the whales is summer; in Tysfjord, it's fall.

Tysfjord hasn't always been a place for whales, but a few decades ago the Gulf Stream became a little warmer, which made the herring change their route into the fjord and, wher-

ever the herring go, the killer whales will follow. Every year some 600 killer whales come to Tysfjord.

The advantage with Tysfjord is that the water is calmer, as opposed to the open sea at Andenes. The downside is that the season is from October to January, which means it's colder and there are not many hours of daylight. In late December the sun doesn't even get above the horizon. But if the weather is decent there should be enough time, normally about four or five hours, to complete the safari.

Since this isn't Sea World, there are no guarantees that you will see killer whales, but Whale Safaris in Andenes will give you another trip free of charge or half your money back if you don't see any whales, something they haven't had to do for several years. A safari costs around 600-800 kr/$95-125.

Whale Safaris in Andenes, ☎ 76-115600, www.whale-safari.com

Arctic Encounters, Skrovkjosen (near Tysfjord), ☎ 75-775746, www.arctic-encounters.com. 75 km (45 miles) south of Narvik on the E6. Follow signs for Skjellesvik/Eidet.

KILLER WHALES

The killer whale can grow up to 10 m (30 feet) long and weigh as much as four tons. Their distinguishing features are a black and white body with two white spots on each side above their eyes. They are the biggest and fastest members of the dolphin family and, just like dolphins, they like to live in groups. They eat fish, mostly herring, one at a time. Since they eat as many as 300 per day, it can take them a while to finish a meal. Sometimes you will see several killer whales forcing the herring up to the surface where they hit the fish with their giant fens until they are unconscious or dead, a technique known as "carousel feeding." It is not uncommon for killer whales to live until 70.

Cultural Adventures

Narvik has a couple of museums, the Ofoten Museum and the War Memorial Museum. The Ofoten Museum focuses on the local history in this region from when the town was first developed to the construction of the Ofoten Railway line. Narvik has a short but intriguing history and part of it, mainly the events in the early 1940s when the city was bombed, has been documented in the War Memorial Museum by the Main Square. Both museums are well worth visiting.

The Ofoten Museum, Administrasjonsveien 3, ☎ 76-960050. Admission 30 kr/$4.70. Open year-round 10 am-3 pm, Monday-Friday, and on weekends in the winter 12 am-3 pm.

The War Memorial Museum, the Main Square, ☎ 76-944560. Admission 40 kr/$6.20. Open 10 am-4 pm in the winter and 10 am-10 pm in the summer.

Places to Stay

SAS Radisson Hotel, Kongensgate 64, Narvik, ☎ 76-977000, www.grandroyal.no, $$$. The best hotel and also the most expensive in Narvik, offering comfortable rooms, restaurants, bar, pub, conference facilities, sauna and solarium.

Breidablikk, Tore Hundsgate 41, Narvik, ☎ 76-941418, www.breidablikk.no, $$. Charming inn located in downtown Narvik with 21 rooms on five floors. Each room can accommodate up to five people so this inn offers excellent value for large groups.

Spor 1 Guesthouse, Brugt 2A, Narvik, ☎ 76-946020, $-$$. Jjust across the bridge from the main square and a 10-minute walk from the train station. Perfect for backpackers and low-budget travelers. Only 160 kr/$25 for a bed in the dormitory.

Places to Eat

Bella Napoli, Kongensgate 42, ☎ 76-942940, $-$$. Pizza place on the second floor of a building near the main square.

Lofoten

Introduction

Lofoten, west of Hinnøya, the largest island in Nordland, is perhaps the most famous archipelago in Scandinavia. Although fishing is still a major reason why people come to Lofoten, most visitors today are attracted by the environment, including the spectacular scenery. Mountains rising over 1,000 m (3,000 feet) on these relatively small islands are something you will not see anywhere else in this part of the world. It's no wonder the mountains here are sometimes referred to as the Lofoten Wall.

This wall divides the Lofoten Islands into two sections, the "inner side" and the "outer side." The inside, facing the mainland and bordered by the Vestfjord, is protected from the strong winds of the Norwegian Sea by the mountains, and is where most people live. The outside, facing the open sea, naturally has a much rougher climate and, although few people live here, it is well worth visiting on days with favorable weather conditions.

Getting Here

❖ By Car

The road from Narvik, E10, is circuitous and, even though the infrastructure has been improved with new tunnels and bridges, you still have to rely on a ferry to get to the island of Austvågøy, where the town of Solvær is located. Overall the roads are of good quality but getting to Lofoten by car still takes time, about five hours from Narvik to Solvær. The advantage you have with a car in Lofoten, of course, is that you can get to places where buses don't go.

❖ By Boat

If you wonder whether to take the bus or the boat to Lofoten from Narvik, take the boat; it is faster, cheaper and more comfortable.

The express boat from Narvik takes you to Solvær on Lofoten in four hours and costs 350 kr/$55. It departs every

day in the summer at 2:30 pm from the harbor – a 10-minute walk south of the city center.

If traveling from the south of Nordland to Lofoten, a boat from Bodø is the obvious choice. From Bodø there are several options; you can either travel to Solvær or to one of the islands in the south such as Røst or Værøy. If you've spent the day in the Tysfjord (perhaps for a killer whale safari), you can take a boat from Skutvik, not far from Tysfjord, to Solvær.

Orientation

There are six main islands that make up Lofoten. Four of them can be reached by car or bus from the mainland, while the outer two are reachable only by boat. **Austvågøy** is the nearest one to the mainland where **Solvær**, the biggest city on Lofoten, is located. Of the 25,000 full-time residents on Lofoten, about 4,000 of them live in Solvær, which is also the administrative center for the archipelago.

Kabelvåg is the village just across the bay from Solvær and was one of the first inhabited places on the islands. Until a few hundred years ago, Kabelvåg was actually the main city on Lofoten, but it's now a quiet little village.

Henningsvær, at Austvågøy's southern tip, is probably the most characteristic fishing village on Lofoten. Despite a smaller population than both Solvær and Kabelvåg, it is by far the busiest of the three today.

Because of the scenery at Lofoten, the archipelago is also an artists' paradise and you'll see quite a few art galleries around the islands, especially in and around Solvær.

The next island you get to is **Vestvågøy**, where you have the option of continuing on the E10 Highway or taking Road 815, which goes along the coastline on the "inner side." There you find **Stamsund**, the biggest village on the island. Right in the middle of Vestvågøy, not far from the E10, is the Viking museum at Borg (more about this under *Adventures*).

Flakstad and **Moskenesøy** are the next two islands. The latter is many people's favorite, with all the picturesque little fishing villages lined up along the "inner coastline" and steep mountains rising up immediately behind them. The island is quite narrow and the E10 takes you past most of these vil-

lages, ending with the little town simply named **Å**, which coincidently also is the last letter in the Norwegian alphabet.

Although the islands that are connected to the mainland by bridges end with Moskenesøy, there are two more that technically belong to Lofoten, **Værøy** and **Røst**. These are much smaller and flatter than the other four so most hiking and all climbing is done on the northern islands. Værøy and Røst are still well worth visiting, especially for birdwatchers. On the **Fuglefjellen** (the bird rocks), a group of islands west of Røst, there are an estimated one million birds every year, half of them puffins.

Practical Information

The main **tourist office** for the Lofoten Islands, ☎ 76-073000, is in Solvær at the main square, where you can find information about the whole archipelago. The main office on Moskenesøy is in the town of Moskenes by the harbor, ☎ 76-091599.

> **Tip:** There are many **websites** with information about the Lofoten Islands, one of which, www.lofoten-startside.no, is especially good and is worth checking out before you get there.

Sightseeing

❖ The Rorbu Cottages

When the first fishermen came here to fish cod in the winters, they needed somewhere to stay. These cottages became known as Rorbu (fisherman's shack) and can be found even today all over Nordland and on Lofoten in particular. Over the years, about 40,000 of these Rorbu cottages have been built on Lofoten but, since most fishermen today sleep on their boats and vessels, the Rorbus are now used mainly for tourists visiting the popular islands. Owners started renting out their cottages in the 1960s and there are about 3,000-4,000 of them left on Lofoten, many of them restored and modernized to better suit visitors. You will recognize a Rorbu cottage quite easily as most are painted red. Red was the cheapest paint in the old days when most of the cottages were built. Some were painted yellow and, if you saw a white Rorbu, you would know that the owner was wealthy, since white was the most expensive color. See

Places to Stay for more information about where you can find Rorbus on Lofoten.

The Viking Museum

The Lofoten Islands were popular with Vikings over 1,000 years ago, as many archaeological findings have shown. The biggest building from the Viking era ever found by archaeologists was in Borg on the island of Vestvågøy. Today there are only ruins left of the foundation but the house has been reconstructed right next to the ruin and was made into a museum. The museum is on a hilltop between the main road and the Borge Church off the E10 about a one-hour drive west of Kabelvåg and Solvær. The Viking Museum at Borg, ☎ 76-084900.

Adventures

❖ On Foot

Climbing

Nord-Norsk Klatreskole in Henningsvær, ☎ 90-574208, offers courses in climbing for all levels. One of the most popular peaks to climb is **Geita** (the Goat) at the top of **Mount Fløyen** just behind Solvær. This is the most famous peak on Lofoten because of its appearance resembling a goat but also because it's one of the highest. Climbing Geita is a real challenge, especially the last part which is steep and demanding. When reaching the top, some take on the challenge of jumping from one "horn" of the goat to the other, a stunt which I do not encourage. Just climbing to the base of Geita, where you'll get a great view of Solvær and the Vestfjord, can be rewarding enough.

Hiking

There are many excellent trails on the islands, ranging from easy to difficult. The people at Lofoten are protective of their environment and

it's imperative that you stay on the designated hiking trails at all times. Any of the tourist offices on the islands will provide you with detailed information on where you can and cannot walk.

Moskenesøy, the outermost land-connected island in Lofoten, has great variety, with flat areas, mountains and lakes that are some of the deepest in the world in relation to the land area. **Sørvågvannet** is one such lake, which has an illuminated trail around it. For a great view, walk up the 50 steps to the Glåpen radio mast from where you can see many of the other islands and, on a clear day, even the mainland.

❖ On Wheels

Biking

The islands of Lofoten are mountainous but if you stay at sea level, in other words along the coastline, you'll find that getting around by bike might just be the best way to explore this area. For a shorter trip, start in Solvær and head west. When you get to Kabelvåg, be sure to stop and visit either the **Lofoten Museum** or the **Lofoten Aquarium**, or both if you have the time. Continue your journey to the busy fishing village of **Henningsvær**, which makes for a total trip of 18 km (11 miles) from Solvær.

Another good place for biking is on **Moskenesøy** where you also have plenty of Rorbu cottages to spend the night if you want to be out for a few days. When in **Å**, the southernmost village on the island, don't forget to visit two interesting museums, the **Norwegian Fishing Village Museum** and the **Stockfish Museum**.

Lofoten Sykkelutleie (bike rental), ☎ 92-231324, is in Solvær and Moskenes. Price for renting a bike is 200 kr/$31 for one day.

❖ On Water

Fishing

Sea fishing is exceptional all over Nordland. Besides Lofoten, Helgeland is also a popular area, particularly in **Saltstraumen** (the straight where the world's strongest current is located), between Bodø and Fauske. Saltwater fishing in Nordland is free but foreign citizens are not allowed to sell their fish.

Lofoten is one of the best places to fish in the world. Fishermen have been coming here for thousands of years to take advantage of the large quantities of cod, especially in the winter, but even the summer offers good fishing.

Although cod fishing prospered in the Middle Ages, it wasn't the fishermen who benefited. King Østein started taxing them heavily, a custom the merchants of the Hanseatic League in Bergen continued for many centuries. Nowadays, however, the fishermen of Lofoten are in control of their own economy.

Something that hasn't changed since the Middle Ages is the technique used for preserving the cod, which is simply to hang it out on large racks to dry. This "tørrfisk," as it is called in Norway, can be seen all over Lofoten and more than 15,000 tons of fish are dried annually in this manner. Other fish include haddock, catfish, herring, redfish, halibut and ling.

To go fishing in Lofoten, you can either rent your own boat or go on an organized fishing tour. Boats can be rented in virtually every village and port on Lofoten. Many professional fishermen also offer to take out tourists on their vessels for the day. Check with any of the tourist offices on Lofoten where they can help you arrange such trips.

Tour Companies in Lofoten

MV *Trollfjord*, Solvær, ☎ 76071790.

Symra, Henningsvær, ☎ 91802019.

THE COD

The season for fishing cod in Lofoten is January-April when the fish swim from Barents Sea in the north to Vestfjorden between Lofoten and the mainland. Every year the cod attract thousands of fishermen from all over the country. The annual world championship in cod fishing is held in Lofoten in March. Cod fishing is now regulated, as opposed to 50 years ago, for example, when some 330 million lbs were caught every year, four times the amount caught now.

Kayaking

Lofoten can be an ideal place for kayaking, especially on the "inner coast" where you are protected from the winds of the ocean by the tall mountains. However, the tidewater creates strong currents, which can be treacherous in some places, so make sure you know where you're going. When planning your trip, trust the advice of the staff where you rent your equipment.

Jann's Adventure Lofoten, ☎ 76-078910 and 99-231100, www.lofoten-aktiv.no, in Kabelvåg, offers kayak rentals and lessons. To rent a single kayak for a day costs about 300 kr/$47. If you have little or no experience you should definitely take a course, considering the difficult conditions for kayaking in Lofoten. The company also organizes hiking, biking and fishing trips.

Places to Stay

Hotel Kabelvåg, Kabelvåg, Lofoten, ☎ 76-078800, www.dvgl.no, $$$. Charming old hotel in the center of the village of Kabelvåg. Don't let the wooden exterior fool you; this is a very modern hotel with small but comfortable rooms.

❖ Rorbu Cottages

The Rorbu cottages are the old fishing cabins (described above), which are renovated and rented out to visitors. Prices vary depending on location but they are normally not as cheap as you might think. For a three-bed Rorbu you can pay as much as 1,000 kr/$157 per night. For three people sharing, it's not that expensive and most cabins are equipped with kitchens, showers and toilets – sometimes even a fireplace. Most Rorbus are open year-round and many offer discounts of about 20% in the winter.

Anker Brygge, Lamholmen, Solvær, ☎ 76-066480, www.anker-brygge.no. This is an upscale Rorbu in Solvær, with a nice restaurant, bar and conference facilities. Group discounts are available.

Lofoten Rorbuferie, Kabelvåg, ☎ 76-078444, www.lofoten-rorbuferie.no. There are seven cabins divided

into 15 apartments with one, two and three bedrooms, each equipped with kitchen and bathroom.

■ North of Nordland

Introduction

Troms and **Finnmark** are the two northernmost counties in Norway and their total area is huge. Finnmark is the biggest county in Norway but also the least populated. The vast majority of the area is covered by open spaces, fjords, rivers and hills. The most famous spot in Finnmark is the **North Cape** which, despite its remote location, is one of the 15 most visited attractions in Norway. The northernmost tip of Europe can be found on the island of **Magerøya**, where the North Cape is located.

Half the population of Troms lives on islands and **Tromsø**, with a population of 60,000 people, is by far the biggest city in this region and the biggest in the northern half of Norway.

Svalbard, the archipelago between mainland Norway and the North Pole, is technically a part of the Norwegian kingdom and has become increasingly popular to visit over the last couple of decades.

Tromsø

Tromsø is a fairly young city; the people here celebrated its bicentenary as recently as 1994. On the small island of Tromsøya, Tromsø was in the early years sometimes known as "the Paris of the north." This nickname was invented when the city was still in the developmental stage and was highly influenced by many foreign cultures and countries, France being one of them. A more appropriate nickname is "the gateway to the Arctic," which has to do with the expeditions by famous explorers Fridtjof Nansen and Roald Amundsen (they started at the port here) and because Tromsø is the primary link to Svalbard. The Arctic Ocean has also been important to fishermen. Both seal hunting and whaling have been conducted here for centuries.

Still another nickname is "midnight fun city," referring to the large number of pubs and bars here. Tromsø actually has

more bars, pubs and nightclubs per capita than any town in the country. The city also has the northernmost university in the world, which means the population is young. About 10% of the city's population are students.

Getting Here

❖ By Plane

SAS/Braathens have daily connections with Tromsø from Oslo, Bergen and a few other cities, **Widerøe** has connections with several of the smaller airports in northern Norway and **Norwegian Airlines** flies from Trondheim and Oslo.

❖ By Car & Bus

The E6 Highway takes you up the coast from Narvik in about four hours by car or bus. The city is on an island but connected by a bridge and an underground tunnel to the mainland so there is no need to take a ferry.

❖ By Boat

The **Hurtigruten** line makes Tromsø one of its stops on the way to Kirkenes. There are also express-boats from Harstad on the island of Hinnøya outside Narvik that travel 75 km/hour (45 mph) and take less than three hours to reach Tromsø.

Getting Around

❖ Car Rentals & Taxis

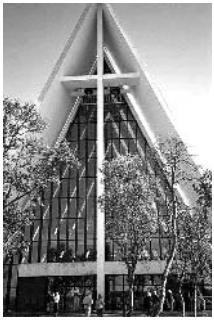
Avis, ☎ 81-533074.

Tromsø Taxi, ☎ 77-603000.

Sightseeing

The bridge you have to cross to reach the city by car is 1,000 m (3,000 feet) long and 43 m (130 feet) high. There used to be so much traffic on the bridge that an underground tunnel had to be built just north of it, but the bridge is still the best way of entering the city because of the views. You can also walk across the bridge, which gives you a good view of the city, probably the second-best view you can get. The best is undoubtedly from the

Storsteinen viewpoint, which you get to before crossing the bridge into town, via the cable car named Fjellheisen. This will seem like a touristy thing to do and it is, but there is still plenty of room at the top to get away from the crowds and the view from up here at 420 m (1,260 feet) must be experienced before you leave the city.



Also on the mainland is the **Arctic Ocean Cathedral (Ishavskatedralen)**, which you should visit before crossing the Tromsøya Strait over to the city. Tromsø has two other churches in the city center, the Tromsø Cathedral and the Catholic Church, but the Arctic Ocean Cathedral, with its unusual architecture, is much more interesting.

❖ Polaria

The University of Tromsø is widely known for its research on the Arctic Region and in 1998 the Norwegian Polar Institute moved its headquarters from Oslo to Tromsø. Later on that summer, Polaria opened its doors to the public and immediately became one of the most popular attractions in the city. Polaria (not to be confused with the Polar Museum, which is in a completely different building across town) is an adventure center devoted to the Arctic, including the environment, wildlife and some of the phenomena that occur, most notably the northern lights.

The guided tour starts with the panorama film made by a famous producer named Ivo Caprino. The film was shot with five cameras attached to a helicopter flying above Svalbard. If you hadn't planned on making a trip to this archipelago in the Arctic before, you might change your mind once you see the film (See *Excursions from Tromsø* for more information on visiting Svalbard).

Polaria is easy to spot in Tromsø. Just a short walk from the city center, its exterior is reminiscent of five giant ice blocks leaning on each other like dominos.

Polaria, Hjalmar Johansensgata 12, ☎ 77-750100, www.polaria.no.

❖ Guided Tours

The Arctic Train

This round-trip train ride, known as Ishavstoget (the Arctic Train), departs from the main square every hour from 11 to 5 between mid-May and mid-August. The driver/guide takes you around the city and its landmarks before returning to the square. Tickets are purchased onboard, 70 kr/$11 (30 for children).

Boat Tour

Tromsø is on an island surrounded by hundreds of other islands so what better way to go sightseeing than on a boat. Just north of Tromsø is the community of **Karlsøy**, which has a rich bird life. To get here, drive to Hansnes about one hour north of Tromsø on Road 863; if you don't have a car you can take bus number 6 or 7 from Tromsø. From Hansnes, a boat takes you out to the island of **Fugløya** (bird island) and other islands in the area. Here you'll find the biggest colonies of white-tailed eagles and puffins in Europe as well as an abundance of many other birds typical of this region.

The tour lasts between five and seven hours. For bookings, ☎ 77-610000. The round-trip can also be arranged by the tourist office as a package, with a taxi ride to Hansnes included.

Events

❖ The Midnight Sun Marathon

The marathon is held every year in the third week of June and, because of the bright summer nights, races start around 8 pm. The "real" marathon is the usual 42 km (28 miles) but there are five other distances to choose from depending on your level and age. If you want to participate, you should register no later than May 15 on www.msm.no. The price for running the marathon is 500 kr/$78 or 100-300 kr for the other distances.

❖ The Northern Lights Festival

The sun sets below the horizon in December and doesn't make an appearance again until more than a month later. For a few days at the end of January, the return of the sun is celebrated with the Northern Lights Festival.

Places to Stay

Rica Ishavshotel, Fr Langesgata 2, ☎ 77-666-400, www.rica.no, $$$$. This hotel has the best location of any hotel in the city, right by the wharf with excellent views of the Tromsø Strait. In addition, it has two restaurants and two bars with great views.

HOTEL PRICES NORWAY	
For double room including taxes. For hostels with no double rooms, price is per bed in dormitory.	
$	Under 300 kr ($47)
$$	300-600 kr ($48-$96)
$$$	601-1,200 kr ($97-$182)
$$$$	Over 1,200 kr ($182+)

Havna Hotel, Terminalgata 32, ☎ 77-781999, www.havnahotel.no, $$$. Three km (1.8 miles) north of the city center, within walking distance from the university, the planetarium and the hospital. The hotel has 38 rooms and is part of the Best Western chain.

Hotel Nord, Parkgata 4, ☎ 77-668300, www.hotellnord.no, $$. The name says hotel but it's more like a bed and breakfast. Simple but comfortable and certainly a good alternative to the more expensive hotels in Tromsø.

Places to Eat

Steakers, Fr Langesgatan 13, ☎ 77-613-330, $$$. This is one of a really good chain of steakhouses; others can be found in Bergen and on Svalbard.

RESTAURANT PRICES NORWAY	
For one main course & a beverage, including taxes.	
$	Less than 100 kr ($15)
$$	100-200 kr ($15-$30)
$$$	201-300 kr ($30-$44)
$$$$	Over 300 kr ($44+)

Strøket Café, Storgata 46, ☎ 77-684400, $$. Strøket is a place for all types of people, with a café, bar, restaurant and disco in the same building.

Bars & Pubs

Ølhallen, Storgata 4, ☎ 77-624580. Established in 1928, this is the oldest pub in the city and could be considered a tourist attraction as much as a pub. Seal- and whale-hunters used to sit here in the old days and exchange tales from their trips. The bar has a souvenir shop and arranges popular tours of the local brewery, Mack's, which claims to be the northernmost brewery in the world.

Åpenbar, Strandtorget 3, ☎ 77-684600. This place has the longest bar in the city and the restaurant also attracts a lot of people with its "tapas" menu. The bar is mainly for people between 25 and 40 years old and is open Tuesday-Saturday with a minimum age requirement of 20 during the week and 25 on weekends. Opening hours are Monday-Thursday 3 pm to midnight, Friday 3 pm to 3 am and Saturday 12 noon to 3 am. The kitchen closes at 10 pm.

Meieriet, Grønnegata 37, ☎ 77-613639. This is the biggest café and bar in Tromsø. There's a pool table, board games and newspapers available for the customers. Open from noon every day, it closes at 2 am Monday-Thursday, 3 am on Saturdays and midnight on Sundays.

Rorbua, Sjøgata 7 (Radisson SAS Hotel), ☎ 77-600000. This bar, named after the characteristic fishing cabins found all over northern Norway, is one of the best-known in Norway, thanks to a long-running television series filmed here.

The North Cape

Introduction

In 1873 King Oskar II, the king of both Norway and Sweden at the time, visited the North Cape which was just the kind of boost the area needed. The first tour boat had arrived a few decades earlier but the king's visit, along with Hurtigruten, the coastal ferry from Bergen that started in the 1890s, is what made the North Cape suddenly popular. It also helps that the plateau now has easy access by car or bus from the ports of Honningsvåg or Skarsvåg. More than 250,000 people visit the cape every year, most of them foreign tourists.

Brief History

The North Cape was discovered by the English explorer Richard Chancellor in the 16th century. Chancellor was trying to find the northern pas-

sage to China but instead ensured himself a place in the history books as the man who gave the North Cape its name. One of the first "tourists" at the North Cape was an Italian priest named Francesco Negri, who was mesmerized by the scenery and claimed he was standing at the end of the world. Negri, and other visitors at the North Cape in the early years, had to climb up the steep cliff from the north side to reach the top and it would take several centuries before tourists started coming here in busloads (and boatloads).

This chapter is partly a recommendation and partly a warning since the North Cape may be the biggest tourist trap in Scandinavia. It's included in this book because you can't write a book about Scandinavia (or Norway) without at least mentioning it, one of the most famous capes in the world. After reading this chapter you can make up your own mind as to whether you should see the place or not.

Why Should You Come Here?

The number one (and only?) reason why people come to the North Cape is for the view. The 307-m (1,000-foot) vertical drop surrounded by ocean is a spectacular sight, especially in the summers when it's enhanced by the midnight sun. On clear days the sun can be seen at the North Cape 24 hours a day between May 13 and July 29.

- **Getting Here:** The drive up to the North Cape is long, but there are some reasons to stop along the way. The **rock carvings at Alta**, for example, are thousands of years old and included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. **Hammerfest** is the northernmost city in the world and requires a bit of a detour if traveling by car, but the Hurtigruten boats make Hammerfest one of their stops.

Reasons Not to Visit

- **It's Overrated:** Besides the view, the North Cape is not much more than just a big parking lot with a café and souvenir shop next to it.
- **False advertising!** Most people think they have reached the northernmost tip of Europe

when they arrive at the North Cape, but they are mistaken. On the same island as the cape (Magerøya) is Knivskjellodden, which is about 2½ km (1½ miles) farther northwest. Knivskjellodden has a distinct disadvantage, however; it can't be accessed by car, nor does it have a 307-m (982-foot) vertical cliff at the edge, which is why the tourist center was placed where it is. Those who still want to can hike to Knivskjellodden on the marked trail, which takes two to three hours and starts about 10 km (six miles) south of the North Cape at a parking lot along the main road.

Getting Here

This depends on where you are coming from. If you happen to be in the county of Finnmark already, or if you were planning to take the Hurtigruten coastal line, which stops in Honningsvåg, getting there does not have to be a hassle.

If you start in Oslo, on the other hand, you have 2,300 km (1,426 miles) to negotiate. The fastest way is by plane, but that can be expensive (look below). You can actually fly as far up as Honningsvåg directly from Oslo in just over three hours, from where you have about 35 km (22 miles) to the North Cape. Alternatively, you can take the train to Bodø and then the bus to the North Cape. This trip will take you a minimum of 46 hours of effective traveling time.

The North Cape is on the island of Magerøya which, if traveling by car, you will get to through one of the longest undersea road tunnels in Europe.

Hurtigruten from Bergen costs about 6,000 kr/$942 (one way) and the combined bus/train ride via Bodø, around 2,500 kr/$392. If driving, there's a fee of 140 kr/$22 per car each way for going through the tunnel to Magerøya. As if getting there isn't expensive enough, access to the North Cape Tourist Center costs another 190 kr/$30, regardless of whether you go by car or bus. If you're out in good time and traveling from Oslo, a plane ride can actually be both the fastest and cheapest form of transportation to the North Cape. Check www.sasbraathens.no for rates.

Svalbard

Introduction

Svalbard, the group of islands 700 km (420 miles) north of mainland Norway, has become increasingly popular as a tourist destination. Today, Svalbard welcomes more than 50,000 people every year to its islands. Quite an amazing number, considering that before the 1990s there were no accommodations for visitors and the few people who came here had to bring their own tents.

If you look up the biggest island of Norway, most books will mention the island of Hinnøya, near Narvik in Nordland. However, Spitsbergen, the biggest island of Svalbard, is 17 times bigger than Hinnøya and, since Svalbard has belonged to Norway since 1925, Spitsbergen is technically the biggest in the country.

Brief History

Svalbard was officially discovered by the Dutch explorer Willem Barents, but the Vikings were probably here long before. The first people came to hunt seals, whales and walruses, but it wasn't until coal mining started here in the first decade of the 20th century that Svalbard gained international attention. The Arctic Coal Company set up a branch at a settlement on Svalbard, which became known as Longyearbyen (the Longyear city), named after the owner of the company. Most of the island's inhabitants today live in Longyearbyen, which is the administrative center of Svalbard. In the last few decades, tourism and scientific research have been the main industries on the islands.

When to Go

The high season for tourism is March-May and the best time to go is toward the end of that period when there is still snow on the ground but with daylight around the clock. If you wish to visit for a weekend at this time of year, it's recommended that you book a hotel room at least six months in advance to be safe.

Getting Here

Svalbard is remote and the best way to get there is by flying, which doesn't have to be too expensive. **SAS/Braathens** fly from both Oslo and Tromsø. The flight takes an hour and 35 minutes from Tromsø and costs about 2,500 kr/$392. From Oslo, it's a four-hour flight and will set you back about 4,500 kr/$700.

Plant Life & Animal Life

Some 60% of Svalbard is covered with glaciers and only 7% has vegetation. The lush areas are found on the island of Spitsbergen. The plant life is affected by the short summers, little precipitation and darkness in the winter, but there are still 165 species of plants on the islands. Also, pay attention when walking on Svalbard; most plants are fragile due to the harsh conditions.

Svalbard is a bird-rich area in the summer but all except one species, the ptarmigan, migrate in the winter. Mammals are not too common. In addition to polar bears (read below) there are Arctic foxes and Svalbard reindeer, which are smaller and more compact than their relatives on the mainland. Whales can be found in the sea and that has attracted hunters to Svalbard for centuries.

❖ The Polar Bear

The polar bear is a protected species on the entire island of Svalbard; you can spot them all over the island year-round. Unlike many other bears, polar bears do not hibernate. If you ever encounter one, it's important not to disturb it. Always keep your distance; they will attack if they feel threatened and they are quite fast. Guided tours are recommended when exploring the area, especially if you are unfamiliar with the territory. If you still want to venture out on your own, bring a weapon. Rifles can be rented on the island to those who show a hunting license or other documented evidence of handling a weapon. Those with no weapon training should always take

the guided tour. Exactly how many polar bears live on Svalbard is uncertain but there are probably about twice as many as there are humans, in other words at least 5,000.

Adventures

Those who decide to head out without a guide or group organized by one of the tour companies must notify the governor's office in Svalbard before leaving. The most popular activities are hiking and boat tours in the summer, while the winters offer dog sledding and snowmobiling. Exploring the caves on Svalbard is an adventure for all seasons.

There are nearly 20 companies organizing guided tours here. These are some of the biggest:

Spitsbergen Travel, Longyearbyen, ☎ 79-026100, www.spitsbergentravel.no. This tour operator/travel agency specializes in tailor-made tours for groups. They offer every kind of activity available on the islands.

Svalbard Wildlife Service, Longyearbyen, ☎ 79-025660, www.wildlife.no. This company specializes in daytrips in the Longyearbyen area, with activities such as mine visits, glacier walks, kayak tours, snowmobile tours, skiing, diving and much more.

Arctic Adventures, ☎ 79-021624, www.arctic-adventures.no. About 12 km (7.2 miles) outside Longyearbyen, this company also offers activities both for the summer and winter season.

Places to Stay

Radisson SAS Polar Hotel, Longyearbyen, ☎ 79-023450, $$$$. The most expensive hotel on the island by far. For a little extra you can get a room with a panoramic view of the fjord.

Spitsbergen Guesthouse, Longyearbyen, ☎ 79-026300, $$$. Much simpler and cheaper than the Radisson but still comfortable.

Denmark

Jutland

■ North Jutland

Introduction

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The county of North Jutland is the biggest in Denmark. It covers the northern quarter of Jutland and 15% of the total area of Denmark, from the Mariagerfjord in the south to Grenen, the northernmost point in Denmark. The **Limfjord** runs through the entire county between west coast and east coast and separates mainland Jutland from its northern section, which, though it's an island, is considered part of the Jutland Peninsula. The island itself doesn't even have an official name and is often just referred to as "northern Jutland."

The two most interesting places to visit in North Jutland are the Limfjord area and the bottle-neck-shaped section in the north known as "**the land of light**." The Limfjord area has **Aalborg**, the capital and biggest city in the county, as its central point, while the **Skagen Peninsula** is the highlight of the trip up north.

The Limfjord Area

Aalborg

❖ **Brief History**

The city of Aalborg, strategically placed at the narrowest part of the Limfjord, was founded by the Vikings more than 1,000 years ago. Aalborg gained city privileges in 1342 but exactly when the city was founded is hard to say. There is documented evidence of its original name, Alabu, dating back to the 11th century.

During the Middle Ages, the port was buzzing and merchants came from all over Scandinavia and beyond. The herring business was one of the cornerstones of the economy in those days and in 1516 the king granted Aalborg a monopoly on all herring trade, which made the city even more prosperous.

The first bridge across the Limfjord was built in 1865 and the railroad bridge was built shortly after. Today there is also a tunnel under the fjord, connecting the E45 Highway, east of the city.

Aalborg is now the fourth-biggest city in Denmark, with 165,000 people. The downtown area is just south of the Limfjord and the northern part of the city, **Nørresundby**, is on the opposite side. Aalborg is also sometimes spelled Ålborg (Å and Aa are pronounced the same way in Danish), which is the more modern style, but the traditional way is more common.

The Liquor Legacy

To many people, the name Aalborg is synonymous with liquor. Not because the city has a good nightlife, with one of the most famous bar streets in Denmark (although that's true), but because the name is also the brand for many popular types of liquor. One of the most famous is aquavit (spelled akvavit in Denmark), traditionally consumed as schnapps along with herring in the summer.

Aquavit comes from the Latin words aqua (water) and vitae (life) and was initially produced with the intention of providing long life (we now know it can have the opposite effect if consumed heavily). Aquavit has existed since the 15th century and has been produced in Aalborg since 1846. Liquor production became a huge business all over Denmark in the mid-19th century, with thousands of distilleries. Aalborg was the leading town and had about 100, but today there is only one left – **De Danske Spritfabrikker** (the Danish Distillers), which was founded in 1881.

An immigrant from Poland named Isidor Henius was one of the pioneers in the liquor industry in Aalborg. Henius introduced many groundbreaking components that improved and sped up the production and made his company one of the leading in the country. But Henius had a fierce competitor in

Harald Jensen, who was also an enterprising man. Over time, the number of distilleries became fewer and fewer and both men eventually sold their respective companies to De Danske Spritfabrikker shortly after it was established in 1881. The legacy of the two pioneers is still evident in the supply of Aalborg products; Aalborg Taffel, for example, a brand of aquavit Henius came up with, is still popular and produced according to the same recipe today, 150 years later. Jensen also introduced an aquavit, now commonly known as Rød (Red) Aalborg.

❖ Getting Here & Getting Around

The airport is only seven km (4.2 miles) from the city center and there are daily flights from Copenhagen. Most people reach Aalborg by car and the E45 Highway passes the city to the east. If you come from the north, to reach downtown Aalborg, take the exit just after you've driven through the tunnel under the Limfjord.

❖ Sightseeing

Most of downtown Aalborg is a pedestrian zone with lots of shops and restaurants – a pleasant area to walk around. There are a lot of historic sights as well and all are within easy walking distance.

The oldest square in Aalborg, **Gammeltorv**, is also the main square. This is where the city's council met and where executions took place in the old days. Today, the square is still considered the central point of Aalborg with a granite obelisk in the center from which all distances to places outside the city are measured.

Not far from Gammeltorv is the **Budolfi Cathedral**, named after an English saint, St. Botolph. The oldest parts of the cathedral date back to the 12th century and it is well worth a visit. The building right next to it is Aalborg's **Museum of History** with, among other things, an impressive collection of silver.

The most impressive house in Aalborg is the five-storey Renaissance building called **Jens Bang's Stone House**, the oldest house in the city, built in 1624. Jens Bang was a wealthy merchant but also a bit of an eccentric and therefore

not universally admired. Despite his money and influence, he was never chosen as councilman of the city, which annoyed him so much that he supposedly decorated the façade of his house with masks caricaturing the council members and one of himself sticking out his tongue at the Town Hall next door. The Aalborg **Town Hall** is still in the same place as in Bang's days, although it's a different house, rebuilt in the 18th century.

The most famous street in Aalborg is named **Jomfru Ane Gade**, mostly known for its bars, but also with 26 restaurants to choose from. Not bad considering the street is only 200 m (640 feet) long.

❖ Events

There are a number of events and festivities in Aalborg, especially in the summer. It's no coincidence that the city's hotels attract more than 300,000 guests every year, a number beaten in Denmark only by Copenhagen. The biggest festival is the **Carnival** during the last weekend in May, which has grown into one of the biggest in northern Europe, with over 50,000 participants dancing and playing music in the downtown area. Even if you visit Aalborg at a different time of the year, especially in the summer, you will most likely encounter a musical event, such as an open-air concert in one of the parks, and you will most assuredly see the musicians playing in streets, mainly on and around **Jomfru Ane Gade**. At the tourist office, you can get an updated list of events taking place at the time you are here.

Hjallerup Market in Hjallerup, 20 km (12 miles) northeast of Aalborg just off the E45 highway, is one of the biggest and oldest markets in Denmark. The market is a 260-year-old tradition that takes place annually the first weekend in June and lasts three days. More than 200,000 people and some 1,200 horses gather from all over Denmark.

Hjallerup Market is the biggest horse market in northern Europe. Horses obviously aren't as important to the economy today as when the market first started in the mid-18th century, but they are still an important part of the event. Even if

you are not interested in buying one, the market is a fun experience, with merchant stands and street performers.

❖ Adventures

On Foot

Guided tours of **De Danske Spritfabrikker (Danish Distillers)** are offered June-August on Mondays and Saturdays at 10 am and 2 pm. Admission is only 40 kr/$6.80, which is a bargain considering the tour lasts for two hours and includes samples from the production line. The tour starts with a presentation about the company, followed by an introduction to the production process and a visit to the Akvavit Museum, followed by a tasting. You can also purchase bottles of aquavit at the company's store before you leave.

De Danske Spritfabrikker and the **Aalborg Akvavit Museum**, ☎ 98-124200, are on C.A. Olesens Gade 1, which is near the Limfjord, about a 10-minute walk from the city center.

Aalborg was founded by the Vikings and the whole area around the Limfjord was densely populated in the Viking era. At **Lindholm Høje**, more than 700 graves were found, which makes it the biggest burial ground ever discovered in Scandinavia. The graves were marked by surrounding stones in the shape of circles, squares or triangles and the oldest ones date back to the sixth century (the Iron Age). Although the graves were discovered in the 19th century, and possibly even earlier, the first major excavations didn't start until the 1950s. Many of the remnants found in these excavations and reconstructed buildings from the Viking and Iron Ages can be found at the Lindholm Høje Museum.

Lindholm Høje is just north of Nørresundby, five minutes by car or bus from downtown Aalborg. For more information, ☎ 96-310428.

On Wheels

Old Train Ride: Every Sunday between mid-June and mid-September, you can take the old train known as Limfjordsbanen. It departs from the station in Aalborg at 2 pm (in July also at 11 am) and takes you on a two-hour round-trip sightseeing

tour, at a comfortable speed, to a harbor by the Limfjord, east of the city. Price for adults is 60 kr/$10.20 (30 kr for children).

Biking: The **Limfjord Route** stretches 610 km (360 miles) along the entire Limfjord between the east coast and the west coast. Besides North Jutland County in the east, the route also covers the two counties of Viborg and Ringkjøbing in the west.

If you don't want to travel the whole length you can take the section covering only North Jutland (the Regional Bicycle Route number 23).

If you start your journey in Aalborg, you can go east on this route until you meet the Kattegat Sea, then cross the fjord at Hals, a little town where the Limfjord ends and the Kattegat Sea begins in the area known as "the mild coast." The fjord is only 600 m (1,920 feet) wide at Hals and the ferry across takes about five minutes. After the ferry, head back to Aalborg and from there, if you want to continue, go west to Aggersund, which is the nearest crossing of the Limfjord west of Aalborg. Aggersund is about half-way between the east cost and the west coast and, if traveling from Aalborg, the last point where you can cross the fjord which drastically widens to the west if you choose to go farther. The whole route is a combined 180 km (110 miles). The section west of Aalborg is nearly twice as long as the section on the east side of the city.

A detailed map of bicycle routes in North Jutland can be purchased at any tourist office in the county for 55 kr/$9.35.

Places to Stay

Store Restrup Manor House, Restrup Kærevej 10, Nibe, ☎ 98-341888, www.royalclassic.dk, $$$-$$$$. Stay in a classic manor house along the Limfjord in a natural landscape and only seven km (4.2 miles) west of downtown Aalborg.

Hotel Aalborg Sømandshjem, Østerbro 27, Aalborg, ☎ 98-121900, www.hotel-aalborg.com, $$$. Fashionable and comfortable hotel near Tivoliland, about a five-minute walk

from downtown. Guests have access to a sauna, solarium and fitness room.

Aalborg Hostel, Skydebanevej 50, Aalborg, ☎ 98-116044, www.bbbb.dk, $-$$. The hostel is only three km from downtown Aalborg in a really pleasant area near the marina.

HOTEL PRICES DENMARK	
For double room including taxes. For hostels with no double rooms, price is per bed in dormitory.	
$	Under 300 kr ($52)
$$	300-600 kr ($53-$106)
$$$	601-1,000 kr ($107-$172)
$$$$	Over 1,000 kr ($172)

Places to Eat

There are about 300 restaurants in Aalborg.

Restaurant Papegøjhaven, Europa Plads 2, Aalborg, ☎ 98-125499, www.papegojhaven.dk, $$. Huge lunch buffet, all you can eat, with traditional Danish food for 125 kr/$21. Available Monday-Saturday between 12 noon and 2 pm. Reservations necessary.

Duus Vinkjælder, Østergågade 9, Aalborg, ☎ 98-125056, $$. Restaurant in the famous Jens Bang's Stone House where you can enjoy good food in a delightful atmosphere.

The Aalborg Tower, Sønder Skovvej 30, ☎ 98-770511, $. Serves light meals, 105 m (960 feet) above sea level with an impeccable view over the city and the Limfjord.

RESTAURANT PRICES DENMARK	
For one main course & a beverage, including taxes.	
$	Less than 75 kr ($12)
$$	75-150 kr ($12-$24)
$$$	151-200 kr ($25-$32)
$$$$	Over 200 kr ($32+)

The Land of Light

The area north of Fredrikshavn is what promoters of tourism like to call "the land of light." You can call it clever marketing, but the light really is different up here, which you won't fully understand or appreciate until you arrive. The best time of year to visit the area is definitely in the summer, but if you want to avoid the big crowds, and the Skagen area in particular gets overcrowded in peak season, then avoid going here in July and early August.

The last stretch of land at North Jutland is called **Skagen Odde** (the Skagen Peninsula), which starts around the fishing village of **Aalbæk** and ends where the east coast and west coast meet at **Grenen**, at the tip of Jutland.

Skagen

❖ Introduction

Skagen, the northernmost town in Denmark, is an old market town dating back at least 600 years, but it has become more famous in the modern era for a group of painters who settled here in the late 19th century (see *Cultural Adventures*). Other characteristic traits are the yellow houses with red-tiled roofs, the ocean, beaches and moorland, and the famous light. The town itself is quite small, only 11,000 people, but it has a lot of pulse in the summer, with numerous shops, bars and restaurants to accommodate the many visitors.

About two million people visit Skagen every year, a huge number for such a small area, but understandable considering what it has to offer. Firstly, and most important to many, Skagen has more hours of sunshine than any other place in Denmark. Clouds seem to scatter when they approach this small strip of land and it also helps that the northern tip of the Jutland Peninsula is sheltered from the southern part of Norway, protecting it from bad weather coming in from the North Sea.

❖ Getting Here & Getting Around

If you drive to Skagen from central and eastern Jutland, from the cities of Århus and Aalborg for example, you will go via Fredrikshavn, the biggest city north of the Limfjord. Fredrikshavn can also be reached by boat from Gothenburg in Sweden and Oslo in Norway with **Stena Line** and from Larvik in Norway with **Color Line**.

From Fredrikshavn it's about 40 km to Skagen and there are both bus and train connections. The other way of reaching Skagen is from the west if you are coming from the city of

Hirsthals, which can be reached by ferry from Oslo and Kristiansand in Norway with Color Line.

Color Line, ☎ 99-561977, www.colorline.dk.

Stena Line, ☎ 96-200200, www.stenaline.dk.

❖ Practical Information

The **Skagen Tourist Office**, ☎ 98-441377, is at the train station in the middle of town on Sct. Laurenti Vej 22. You can find lots of information about Skagen and the surrounding areas on the Internet, www.skagen-tourist.dk.

Aalbæk has a small tourist office on Centralvej 4, ☎ 98-488655.

❖ Sightseeing

Driving up to Skagen is a sightseeing tour in itself. After you've passed Fredrikshavn, you will enter an area unlike any other in Denmark. This unique environment, with the moorland and sandy dunes, gives a feeling of being in a different country. Before you get to Skagen you will pass the old fishing village of **Aalbæk** about halfway between Fredrikshavn and Skagen. Aalbæk has a small harbor and was for centuries a popular stop for visitors on their way to Skagen. They often grabbed a bite to eat at the local inn, which is still there today.

The Skagen area is divided into two parts, the city of Skagen itself, which is on the east coast, and the village known as **Gammel Skagen** (often abbreviated Gl. Skagen) on the west coast just across from Skagen. Gammel means old in Danish but the village itself, although picturesque and charming, is quite modern, dominated by luxury hotels and expensive restaurants. Gl. Skagen is more tranquil than Skagen and has become a health resort, with spas in many of the hotels. Some say that Gl. Skagen is the most beautiful part of Skagen, and when the sun sets in the evenings, it would be hard to argue with that. A sunset on the west coast with the sea in the foreground is undoubtedly prettier.

The village called Skagen, however, is the "real" Skagen. This is where the famous harbor is, which is quite big for such a small village. The port may not be as busy as Copenhagen or Århus in terms of transported goods, but Skagen actually

brings in more fish to its harbor than any other port in Denmark. Walking around in the harbor area is a must when you're here. Even if you are not an early riser, you should try to get there in time for the fish auction, which takes place every weekday morning at 6:30 (lobster) and 7 (fish), usually drawing a pretty big crowd. Whether you come to buy your own fish or just watch others bid, it's a fun experience.

> **Tip:** You shouldn't leave Skagen before eating some of their fish and there are plenty of restaurants to choose from (more about those under *Places to Eat*).

Tilsandede Kirke

The interesting looking church known as Tilsandede Kirke (roughly translated "the sandy church") was probably built in the 14th century and was the main church in Skagen for several centuries. It now consists of a tower only, since it stood in the way of the great sand migration which started in the 16th century. Eventually the congregation couldn't get into the church because of all the sand and in 1795 it had to close down, by orders of the king. To get to the church from Skagen, take Gl. Landesvej, which is the old road toward Fredrikshavn running parallel to today's main road. Turn left after about two km where the sign indicates, park the car at a parking lot and walk the last 500 m (1,500 feet).

The Migrating Desert

Råbjerg Mile is the name of the migrating desert area just south of Skagen. It was created sometime in the 16th century when the strong winds of the North Sea tore down much of the vegetation and started pushing the sand inland from the shore. Råbjerg Mile moves at a rate of 15-20 m (45-60 feet) per year to the northeast and you can still see tracks from its movements as far back as Råbjerg Stene (the Råbjerg Stones) a few km southwest of the desert. To get to Råbjerg Mile, take Kandestedvej from Road 40 between Skagen and Aalbæk.

> **Did You Know?** Deserts in this part of the world are obviously rare, something many movie producers have taken advantage of. Some of the scenes in *The English Patient*, which takes place in the Sahara Desert, were shot at Råbjerg Mile.

The Lighthouses

There are four lighthouses in Skagen from four different generations, each with its own interesting story to tell. The first was built in the 16th century and made of wood. **Vippefyr**, as it is known, was equipped with a basket in which a fire was lit and raised by a lever. It's just north of the town center, in a reconstructed version from 1958.

Adjacent to Vippefyr is **Den Hvide Fyr** (the White Lighthouse), left, which was the first stone lighthouse in Skagen, built in the 18th century. **Den Grå Fyr** (The Grey Lighthouse) is a little farther up the road toward Grenen and the newest edition to the family is **Skagen West**, the remote-controlled lighthouse from 1956 near the outermost point of Grenen – where a lighthouse should be. The reason those other lighthouses were erected at their respective places is because the coastline has been extended farther and farther north each passing year due to the effects of wind and sand. In other words, each lighthouse was at the tip of the peninsula when it was built. The best view is from the Grey Lighthouse, the highest lighthouse in Denmark, where you can climb up in the tower and see the whole Grenen area where the seas meet to the north.

❖ Grenen

Grenen, three km (1.8 miles) north of Skagen, is the name of the outermost tip of Jutland and consequently the northernmost point of Denmark where the two seas, Skagerrak and Kattegat meet.

> **Did You Know?** Grenen, which means "the branch" or "tree limb," was named for its narrow shape.

No other place in Scandinavia has such a visually distinct separation between two seas as Skagen does. Most people park their cars at the parking lot and walk the last two km, but you also have the option of taking a ride with

Sandormen (the sand snake), a tractor carriage that departs frequently in the summer from the parking lot and makes a 30-minute round-trip to Grenen for 15 kr/$2.55 per passenger.

Grenen is most fascinating to visit when the wind is blowing. The more the wind blows the more the border is accentuated by waves crashing into each other on the imaginary line straight out from Grenen. An interesting fact is that when you look out on this line where the waves meet, your instincts probably tell you that you are facing due north since you are at the northernmost tip; however, you are actually turned towards the east.

You will notice several "No swimming!" signs and even in calm weather you should respect this warning. Skagen has many good beaches available for swimming but Grenen is not one of them, so leave your bathing suits in the car for the time being.

❖ Adventures

On Foot

The Skagen Odde Center: There are many unique things about the environment in Skagen and three things in particular stand out as natural phenomena of the region – the special light, the meeting of the seas, and the migrating desert.

If you want to find out more about these natural phenomena, the Skagen Odde Nature Center is just north of town on Batterivej. As you leave Skagen going north toward Grenen, take a left at the first lighthouse, which is Batterivej.

The Nature Center was designed by Jørn Utzon, the famous Danish architect who also designed the opera house in Sydney. The permanent section of the exhibition focuses on the four components – sand, water, wind and light – that contribute to the fascinating environment of the area. The exhibition will answer a lot of questions you might have, but you should try to experience all the natural wonders before you visit the Nature Center, so you know exactly which questions you want answered.

For those interested in the flora and fauna, there's a walking path just outside the center across a marshland and you can get guided tours if you ask.

On Wheels

Biking: There are plenty of opportunities to bike, though there are no special bike routes in Skagen. When biking around in Skagen there are no highways to worry about and the best way is just to take one of the common roads and see where it leads you. You can't go wrong wherever you end up (as long as you can find your way back).

Bike Rentals: There are a couple of places in Skagen and one in Aalbæk. In addition, some hotels and campsites offer bikes for rent. Expect to pay about 75 kr/$13 for one day. **Skagen Cykeludlejning**, Banegårdspladsen, is next to the train station and tourist office, ☎ 98-441070; the other is **Pedersen**, Kappelborgvej 23, Skagen, ☎ 98-442528.

❖ Cultural Adventures

The Skagen Painters

Art and culture are today a major theme in Skagen and even those who are not particularly keen on art should at least be aware of the group of painters who helped put Skagen on the map and add to the mystique and legacy of the old fishing village.

The first artists started coming to Skagen in the 1870s and they came from all over Denmark, some even from abroad. Their main reason for moving up to this northern tip of Denmark was the captivating scenery provided by the sea and the sky, in combination of sand, wind and light.

The collective name for the most famous artists who lived and worked in Skagen in the late 19th and early 20th century is the Skagen Painters. Some of the most famous of the Skagen Painters were P.S. Krøyer, Anna and Michael Ancher and Holger Drachman (although the latter was more famous as a poet than a painter). Their popularity naturally had a big impact on tourism in Skagen. These days most visitors come mainly for the natural environment, the beaches and the

numerous hours of sunshine, only learning about the painters after they've arrived.

Anna Ancher & Marie Kroyer by Michael Ancher, 1893

Anna Ancher was the only Skagen Painter who was born and raised in Skagen. Her parents were the owners of the Brøndum Hotel, which at the time was both an inn and a grocery store. Anna showed talent as an artist early in her life, but being a woman painter in those days was not always accepted by everyone so she held a low profile in the beginning. She was spurred on when famous painters started coming to Skagen. One of them was Michael Ancher, whom she married in 1880 and had a daughter with. Most members of the Skagen Painters studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts but Anna Ancher would not be accepted there, despite her obvious talent. Many art experts today regard her as one of the best painters in Denmark's history.

The Museums

There are an incredible number of museums in Skagen considering the size of the town. The **Skagen Museum** is the one you definitely shouldn't miss. The museum was founded by the Skagen Painters in 1908 and contains a large collection of works by the famous artists who lived and worked in Skagen at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Next to it is the now famous **Hotel Brøndum**, where the painters used to sit in the dining room, painting, eating and talking.

You'll find it on Brøndumsvej 4, which is just a three-minute walk from the tourist office up the main road, on the second

street to your right. The Ancher's have a separate museum close to the Skagen Museum in their old house on the opposite side of the main road.

Grenen Art Museum is the one devoted to contemporary art in Skagen and is worth a visit while you take the tour out to Grenen.

Katedralen (the cathedral), at the end of the pier, has a display of paintings by Russian artists.

❖ Places to Stay

Hotels in Skagen are more expensive than in other parts of the country and it can be tough to find a room in July and early August. Pre-booking is strongly recommended, whether you want to stay in a hotel, bed and breakfast, campsite or hostel. If for some reason you don't have a reservation, you will have a hard time finding a place, but you can always try renting from a private person. Many people rent out houses or rooms to visitors. You will see signs that say "room for rent" along the roads all over Skagen while driving around. Either stop by and knock on the door or call the number on the sign if nobody is home. These tend to fill up quickly as well, but it's worth a shot. Contacting the tourist office is always a good way to start when searching for accommodations; they can provide you with a long list and even make some calls for you.

Ruths Hotel, Hans Ruthsvej 1, Gl. Skagen, ☎ 98-450875, www.ruths-hotel.dk, $$$$. One of the classic hotels in Gammel (Old) Skagen.

Brøndums Hotel, Anchersvej 3, Skagen, ☎ 98-441555, $$$. A simple but charming hotel once owned by Erik Brøndum, the father of Anna Ancher in the 19th century. The Skagen Painters used to spend a lot of time here painting each other's portraits, some of which can be seen on the walls.

HOTEL PRICES DENMARK	
For double room including taxes. For hostels with no double rooms, price is per bed in dormitory.	
$	Under 300 kr ($52)
$$	300-600 kr ($53-$106)
$$$	601-1,000 kr ($107-$172)
$$$$	Over 1,000 kr ($172)

Hotel Den Gamle Skibssmedie, Vestre Strandvej 28, Skagen, ☎ 98-446716, $$-$$. Charming hotel near the harbor in Skagen. Open year-round.

Skagen Hostel, Rolighedsvej 2, Skagen, ☎ 98-442200, $-$$.

❖ Places to Eat

Pakhuset, Rødspættevej 6, Skagen, ☎ 98-442000, $$$. In the old warehouse by the harbor is a building known as Pakhuset, used by fishermen in the old days and now one of the best seafood restaurants in town.

Aalbæk Gamle Kro, Skagensvej 42, Aalbæk, ☎ 98-489022, $$-$$$. This old inn was established in the early 19th century and is a popular place for people to stop and grab something to eat on the way up to Skagen. It's right in the village and serves traditional Danish food.

Jakobs Café & Bar, Havnevej 4, Skagen, ☎ 98-441690, $-$$. In the town center of Skagen, only a short walk from the harbor, it's always popular in the summer with live music and good meals at reasonable prices.

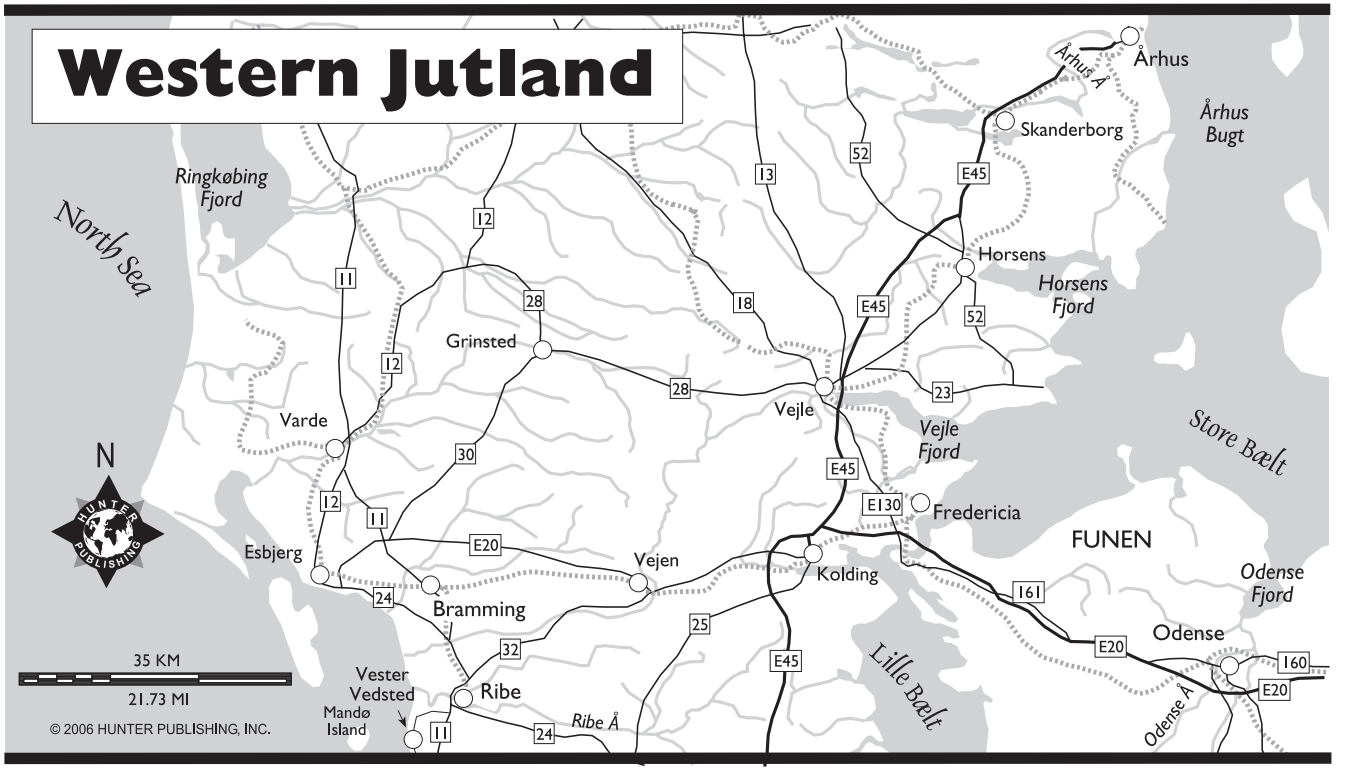
RESTAURANT PRICES DENMARK	
For one main course & a beverage, including taxes.	
$	Less than 75 kr ($12)
$$	75-150 kr ($12-$24)
$$$	151-200 kr ($25-$32)
$$$$	Over 200 kr ($32+)

■ Århus

Introduction

Århus (sometimes spelled Aarhus) is the biggest city and unofficial capital of Jutland and western Denmark but also the name of the county, which includes Randers, the sixth-biggest city in Denmark, and the Djursland Peninsula to the east.

The city of Århus is the second biggest in Denmark with 275,000 people out of which 10% are students at the university. Århus is also the cultural capital of Jutland with six theaters, a concert hall and many festivals during the year.


Western Jutland
North Sea
Ringkøbing Fjord
Varde
Esbjerg
Grinsted
Bramming
Vejen
Vester Vedsted
Mandø Island
Ribe
Ribe Å
Vejle
Vejle Fjord
Kolding
Fredericia
FUNEN
Lille Bælt
Store Bælt
Horsens
Horsens Fjord
Skanderborg
Århus Å
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Århus Bugt
Odense Fjord
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Some will say that Århus is a smaller version of Copenhagen, but that is not really fair to Århus. Both Copenhagen and Århus are the commercial and cultural centers of their respective regions and both have pedestrian areas downtown named Strøget. But the two cities have completely different atmospheres; while Copenhagen is and feels like a big city, Århus is more like a village with a pulse.

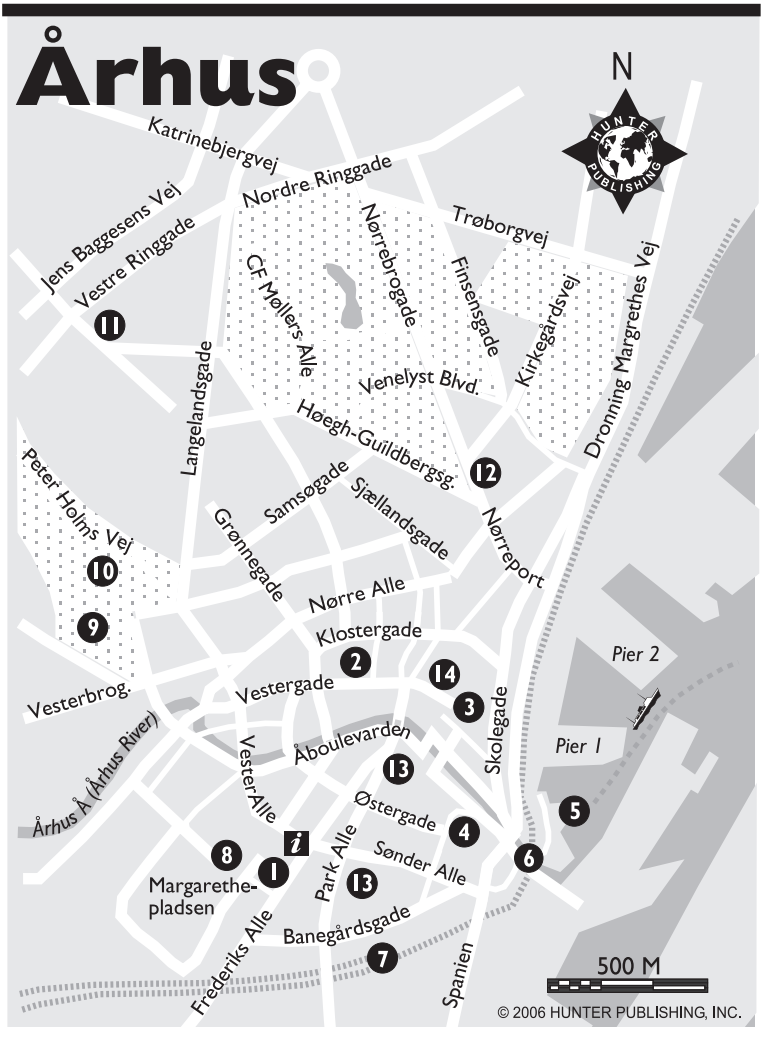
Brief History

Århus is an old city, founded in the 10th century by the Vikings, who liked to establish new settlements on the coast by the mouth of a river. The old Viking name for the city was Aros, which means "the river mouth." Over time, the name changed from Aros to Århus, which also became the name of the river. The first cathedral, the **Vor Frue Church** (the Church of Our Lady), was built in the 11th century and is not far from the present cathedral in Århus, built some 200 years later. The Vor Frue Church has been rebuilt but the crypt from the original building can still be seen inside.

Vor Frue Church

Århus expanded a great deal when the new cathedral was built and flourished during the Middle Ages much thanks to its big harbor. The city continued to grow and in the 17th century it became the second-biggest city in Denmark. Both trading and population stagnated over the next 200 years and it wasn't until the mid-19th century that Århus started to see some changes. The harbor was expanded around the same time the railroad was built,

Vor Frue Church crypt



1. Town Hall (*Rådhus*)
2. Vor Frue Kirke
3. Domkirke; Bispetorvet; Århus Theater; Women's & Occupation Museums
4. Fredenstorv, Fredensgade
5. Ferry Terminal
6. Europa Plads
7. Train Station (*Banegård*)
8. *Musikhus*; Scandinavia Center
9. The Old Town (*Den Gamle By*)
10. Botanical Garden (*Botanisk Have*)
11. Stenomuseum
12. Museum of Fine Arts
13. *Strøget* (Skt. Clemens Torv, Søndergade, Ryesagade)
14. Latin Quarter

i Tourist Information

Ferry Lines

Railway Lines

which led to the biggest upswing Århus had seen since the Middle Ages.

The present city hall building and the university buildings were built in the 1930s and 1940s and Århus went from being just a commercial port to a modern city. Still, it retains many traces of the past, which is what makes Århus so popular today among citizens and visitors alike.

Getting Here & Getting Around

By Plane

Århus Airport is an hour's drive northeast of the city on the Djursland Peninsula. There are direct flights from Copenhagen, Gothenburg, Stockholm, Oslo and London. For more information on flights and transportation between the airport and the city of Århus, ☎ 87-757000, www.aar.dk.

By Car

Most people get to Århus by car and the E45 Highway runs north/south along eastern Jutland from Frederikshavn in the north to the German border. Copenhagen is 3½ hours away via Funen. Fredrikshavn is 1½ hours away.

Parking spaces along the streets can be hard to find in the city center but there is a huge parking lot by the harbor called Skolebakken. The shopping malls, Salling and Bruun's, also have multi-storey car parks, but they are more expensive.

❖ Car Rental

Europcar, Sønder Allé 35, Århus, ☎ 89-331111, www.europcar.dk.

Avis, Spanien 63, Århus, ☎ 86-192399, www.avis.dk.

By Boat

Ferries depart from Odden in the northwestern part of Sealand to Århus, a 65-minute trip. Another option is a ferry from Kalundborg on the west coast of Sealand, which takes 2½ hours.

Taking the ferry to Århus from Sealand was more common before the bridge connecting Sealand with Funen was built in 1998 but is still a popular way of getting to eastern Jutland.

Sightseeing

The compact city center in Århus allows you to get to every attraction, restaurant, café and hotel on foot and the Central Train Station is in the middle of town. If you are standing outside the main entrance of the station, facing north (away from the station), you have the pedestrian area, **Strøget**, right in front of you. **Ryesgade** is the name of the street which leads into Søndergade after crossing Sønder Allé where the **Århus City Hall** is a couple of blocks to your left. Strøget is the main shopping area in Århus and takes you all the way down to the cathedral by the **Bispetorvet Square**. Just before you get to Bispetorvet you will cross the Århus River and look down on **Åboulevarden**, the street along the river with its many open-air cafés and restaurants.

The **cathedral** was built in the 13th century in honor of St Clemens, a Roman pope who was made into a martyr after he was drowned while tied to an anchor and became the patron saint of sailors. It is also the longest church in Denmark, at 93 m (298 feet), which is also the height of the tower. Entrance to the cathedral is free and it's open year-round from Monday to Saturday.

Around the Bispetorvet Square there are a couple of museums worth visiting: the **Viking Museum** and the **Women's Museum**. The Women's Museum (Kvindemuseet) is entirely devoted to the female gender, which doesn't mean that it's not open to male visitors. The museum has both a permanent section, depicting the history and culture of women in an interesting way. The museum is in a building behind the cathedral which was built in the mid-19th century as a city hall and jail, then made into the police station when the present city hall was built at Park Allé.

To the west of the cathedral is the square **Store Torv** and a little farther down is **Lille Torv**. The area around these two squares in the northern section of downtown is quieter than the busy Søndergade, but you will find some of the best shops and restaurants here on some of the side streets.

After you've paid the Vor Frue Church a visit and head back toward the center from Lille Torv, you will cross the Århus River on a street named **Immervad**, with the Åboulevarden, packed with restaurants, on your left. The street will take you

up to the city hall but, instead of walking straight ahead, take Frederiksgade, the pedestrian street on your right running parallel. In the same building as the city hall is also where you find the tourist office. The newly built **art museum, Aros**, is only a stone's throw away down Vester Allé and if you keep going on this road you will eventually get to the open-air museum, **Den Gamle By**.

Practical Information

The **Tourist Office** is in the same building as the city hall and has plenty of information, not just on Århus, but on the entire region of Jutland and even quite a bit about the rest of Denmark as well. ☎ 89-406700, www.visitaarhus.com.

THE ÅRHUS PASS

This card gives you free entrance to many attractions, free access to public transportation and free parking at Skolebakken by the harbor. The card costs 97 kr/$16 for one day, 121 kr/$21 for two days and 171 kr/$29 for an entire week.

Guided Tours

Guided bus tours take you around the city and all the famous landmarks, such as the cathedral and the city hall in the city center, as well as the surrounding areas, including the university, the stadium, Den Gamle By and the botanical gardens. The tours depart outside the tourist office on Park Allé at 10 am daily in the summer. For more information and bookings, ☎ 89-406700.

Cultural Adventures

Museums

❖ Aros

Copenhagen is the cultural capital of Denmark, with plenty of museums, and Jutland was for many years in dire need of

something to match the nation's capital. The idea and desire had been there for several years; the necessary funding, however, had not. Finally, in April of 2004, a new art museum named Aros (after the Viking name for the city of Århus) could open its doors. The cube-shaped building in glass and brick became one of the largest museums in northern Europe. Aros is also quite unusual, since it's in the middle of a relatively big city, as opposed to most art museums in northern Europe of comparable size.

The museum features contemporary art by Danish as well as famous international artists from the 19th century to present day, such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein. The exhibition is divided into six floors where you can take the elevator up to the top and work your way down until you get to the basement. There you find The Nine Rooms, which you will probably either love or hate. It's called "international installation art" and requires an open mind when you visit.

In addition to the art exhibition itself you should not forget to take the escalator from the top floor up to the rooftop where you will have a great view of the city of Århus.

Aros can be found along Vester Allé, only a 10-minute walk from the train station and five minutes from the tourist office. It's open Tuesday-Sunday between 10 am and 5 pm (until 10 pm on Wednesdays) and closed on Mondays. Admission is 60 kr/$10 (free for children up to age 16). For more information, ☎ 87-306600, www.aros.dk.

❖ Den Gamle By

The open-air museum, Den Gamle By (the Old Town), on Viborgvej 2, ☎ 86-123188, is the biggest, best and most famous open-air museum in Denmark and the biggest attrac-

tion in Århus. It's just west of downtown, about a 20-minute walk. When it opened in 1914 it was one of the first open-air museums in the world and has been the inspiration and model of other museums opening in Scandinavia and in many other places around the world.

Even though it's been around for nearly 100 years, its popularity has only increased every year, and it welcomed more than three million people in the last 10 years.

Contrary to what you may think, Den Gamle By is not where the old city of Århus was located; like most open-air museums, it is just a reconstruction of what a town looked like in Denmark a few centuries ago. Most buildings have been transported from other locations in Jutland. Still, it's a fascinating experience to walk around in the village and step back in time. Another reason for visiting this part of town is the huge botanical garden adjacent to Den Gamle By.

Events

The Århus Festival

The annual Århus Festival takes place for one week at the end of August and beginning of September. In 2004 the 40th anniversary of this festival was celebrated. There are shows, concerts and many other events during the Århus Festival and each year it has a different theme. There are stages with shows and performances at Bispetorvet and Store Torv by the cathedral. The biggest stage is at Bispetorvet Square, where you can enjoy theater in the day and concerts in the evenings. The streets are filled with performers at St Clemens Torv and along Søndergade. Restaurants and cafés are packed with people in the evenings, especially along Åboulevarden and Skolegade.

Shopping

Århus has many pedestrian streets with plenty of shops. The most famous is **Strøget**, with **Søndergade** and **Ryesgade** between the train station and St Clemens Torv near the cathedral. **Frederiksgade**, running parallel to Søndergade a couple of blocks west, is partially pedestrian and is narrower and a little cozier than Strøget.

Once you've crossed the Århus River you get to the very best of the shopping streets. While Strøget has the big brands, the area around **Store Torv** and **Lille Torv** just west of the cathedral is where you can find some great deals, especially in design products, such as jewelry, watches, kitchenware and much more, which Århus is famous for.

The **Latin Quarter** is the name for the area just north of Lille and Store Torv, a picturesque neighborhood with cobblestone streets.

If you come to Århus by train, you also have **Bruun's Shopping Center** in the building adjacent to the train station.

Places to Stay

Best Western Hotel Ritz, Banegårdspladsen 12, ☎ 86-134444, www.hotelritz.dk, $$$-$$$$. Right in the center of Århus, this is one of the best hotels in the city. There is a bar and a restaurant in the hotel. A car park for guests is available.

Hotel La Tour, Randersvej 139, ☎ 86-167888, www.latour.dk, $$$. A good choice and reasonably priced if you have your own transportation as it is just north of the city. Comfortable and well suited for families with children.

Cab Inn Århus Hotel, Kannikegade 14, ☎ 86-757000, www.cabinn.dk, $$-$$$. This is near the Århus River (one block up) and has standard amenities at a reasonable price. Some rooms are especially designed to accommodate disabled guests.

Århus Hostel, Marienlundsvej 10, ☎ 86-167298, www.danhostel.dk/aarhus, $-$$. Just north of the city, about 10 minutes by car, the hostel is situated in a tranquil area surrounded by forest and close to the beach.

Places to Eat

Many of the best restaurants are on Åboulevarden but you should also try exploring a few of the side-streets. **Skolegade**, for example, together with **Åboulevarden** and the **Bispetorvet Square**, form a triangle of bars, pubs and restaurants lined up one after another.

Globen Flakket, Åboulevarden 18, ☎ 87-310333, www.globen-flakket.dk, $$$. A two-storey spot with a café upstairs and a restaurant downstairs, on the corner of Åboulevarden and Skolegade.

Sidewalk, Åboulevarden 56, ☎ 86-181866, www.sidewalk-cafe.dk, $$-$$$. Really nice café with a big open-air zone along the Åboulevarden. Good place to go either for a coffee in the afternoon or a three-course meal for dinner.

Gaucho-Argentinsk Bøfhus, Åboulevarden 20, ☎ 86-137065, www.gaucho.dk, $$. This restaurant is for those craving a big juicy steak of the highest quality. There's a pleasant atmosphere and, even if you're not a meat lover, there are plenty of other foods to choose from on the menu.

Djursland

Introduction

Djursland is the peninsula on the east coast of Jutland just northeast of Århus. The area is known as one of the prime destinations in the summer with its scenic landscape and sandy beaches. But there is plenty of history and culture to explore as well, and it's ideal for a variety of activities and adventures.

Getting Here

❖ By Car

The Djursland Peninsula can be reached by taking Road 15 if you are coming from the city of Århus. If heading north on the E45 Highway, take exit 44 (Grenaa/Ebeltoft), which leads into Road 15. Road 15 stretches along the southern section of the peninsula and ends up in Grenaa at the eastern tip. If traveling from Fredrikshavn or Aalborg in the north of Jutland, take exit 42 (Road 16 toward Grenaa) on the E45 just after you've passed the city of Randers.

❖ By Boat

Grenaa has connections with Varberg on the Swedish west coast. **Stena Line**, ☎ 96-200200, www.stenaline.dk, has several departures every day and the trip takes about four hours. Ebeltoft

can be reached from Odden on northwestern Sealand, which is only a 45-minute trip.

Ebeltoft

Ebeltoft, which means "Apple Garden," on a tongue of land at the southeastern tip of the Djursland Peninsula, is an idyllic little village about one hour by car from Århus. The village, founded in the year 1300, was an important market town in the Middle Ages and is today one of the most popular destinations for summer visitors to this part of Jutland.

This is not one of the oldest towns in Denmark by any means; Århus, for example, is several centuries older. But, unlike Århus, which has grown into a city of nearly 300,000 people, Ebeltoft hasn't changed much since the Middle Ages and the old town still looks pretty much the same as it did then.

Sightseeing

A good starting point is the **Tourist Office** by the sea with the frigate ***Jylland*** right next to it. Jylland is the longest wooden ship in the world (72 m/216 feet) and was built in 1860. It was only used in battle once, four years after it was built, and is well preserved thanks to extensive maintenance. Those who want can enter this grand old ship and walk around it in the dry dock for 60 kr/$10, any day of the year except holidays.

Ebeltoft is also known for its glass art and the **Glass Museum**, just a short walk down Strandvejen (the main street along the shore), is well worth a visit.

Take any of the side-streets from Strandvejen and walk up to the town center, which will feel like taking a step back in time. The narrow cobblestone streets with the small charming houses are what make Ebeltoft so special. The biggest landmark in Ebeltoft is the **Ebeltoft Town Hall** by the old town square. The smallest of its kind in Denmark, the Town Hall was originally built in 1576, although it had to be torn down

and reconstructed 200 years later. Nowadays there's a museum in the building. Traditionally the town hall was a place where the citizens of Ebeltoft would get married and many people, citizens and visitors alike, follow in the footsteps of this tradition. If you want to combine your visit to Ebeltoft with a wedding, you should call the Marriage Department of the town hall, ☎ 89-521121, to make arrangements.

WATCHMEN

If you visit Ebeltoft in the summertime, you might encounter the watchmen patrolling the streets in the evenings. In the old days, town watchmen walked the streets of many Danish towns and, apart from watching over the town and its citizens, they were also in charge of lighting the streetlights. Today, there isn't much need for either of those functions, but the show is appreciated by visitors.

❖ Guided Tours

There are guided tours of the old town every Tuesday evening, 6:30 pm to 8 pm from the end of June to mid-August. The tours are free and they start at Nytorv, the new city square at the corner of Skindergade and Nørrebakke. They are given in Danish, English and German.

❖ The Tourist Office

Ebeltoft Tourist Office, Strandvejen 2, ☎ 86-341400, is quite small, but it has lots of brochures and information. It not only covers the popular area of southeastern Djursland but the office also has plenty of information about traveling to and from the peninsula.

Grenaa

Grenaa (sometimes spelled Grenå) was founded in the 15th century and was, along with Ebeltoft, one of the busy trading

centers on the east coast of Jutland. Today, it's the biggest city in Djursland, with 20,000 people. Still, it is often neglected by visitors as many arrive here with the ferry from Varberg in Sweden, then drive to wherever their final destination may be – which Grenaa normally isn't. Those who choose to stick around for a while in this old port can find plenty of things to occupy their time, at least for a day or two.

❖ Sightseeing

The downtown area of Grenaa is a couple of minutes by car from the harbor. The main square with the 14th century church, which looks almost too big for this little square, is the center of the town.

The **Tourist Office** is on the main square in an old building originally built as a town hall in the early 19th century. The town is pleasant to walk around in, with pedestrian streets and lots of nice little shops, cafés and restaurants. A good idea for a tour is to buy a map at the Tourist Office for 10 kr/$1.70. It tells you about all the old houses in the north section of town, which still has the feel of the 19th century when most houses were built.

One of the oldest houses in Grenaa is a former merchant's house from 1760 just south of the square, which now houses the **Djursland Museum** and the **Danish Fishery Museum**. The museums are open every day in the summer until 4 pm and cost 30 kr/$5.10 to enter (for both). The Tourist Office also has a museum, **Ringen**, dedicated to jewelry from the 20th century to the present.

Djursland is known for its long white sandy beaches and the seven-km (4.2-mile) beach in Grenaa, just south of the city, is one of the best on the peninsula.

The **Kattegat Center**, named after the sea east of Jutland, is divided into three parts: an **aquarium**, an **environmental center** and a **science center**, which together inform visitors about all aspects of life in the sea. The large building is by the harbor in Grenaa.

Adventures

❖ On Foot

Mols Bjerge is the hilly area on the west side of the Ebeltoft Bay. The word bjerge means mountains or hills, although people from northern Scandinavia would laugh at the name if they came here.

The highest point in Denmark, **Yding Skovhøj**, in central Jutland, is 173 m (550 feet) above sea level. **Mols Bjerge** is not far behind at 137 m (430 feet) and the landscape and surrounding area with sea views make it more impressive.

It was during the last Ice Age that these narrow ravines and deep valleys were formed. Man has used the fertile soil of Mols Bjerge for agriculture ever since the Stone Age. Evidence of this era can be seen in several places with stripes of high-backed fields created by wheel ploughs in the Middle Ages. The farmland has since been replaced by fields of heather and deciduous forests.

One of the best views is from the top of **Trehøje**, which is the second-highest point of Mols Bjerge. During the Bronze Age this point was a burial ground and the spirits of the dead sailors buried here were supposed to protect the area from invasions.

Any parking lot is a good starting point for a hike. It's easy to find your way around the area on marked trails and, although it's a bit of a challenge to walk up the hills, the views once you arrive at the top are worth both your time and effort.

Plant Life & Animal Life

❖ Mols Bjerge

Deciduous forests with oak trees used to dominate on Mols Bjerge before the area became inhabited and people started using the slash-and-burn method to create fields for agriculture. Today, oak trees only exist in a few scattered forests in the hills but in recent years plantations have been established in an effort to increase the number of trees. The wildlife is still rich thanks to the sandy soil and sunny weather and more than half of all wild Danish plant species can be found here. Flowers such as the pasque flower, catchfly and cudweed are quite common.

There are foxes, hares and deer, to name a few, and reptiles such as lizards and vipers are quite often spotted, along with many birds of prey.

Adventures

❖ On Wheels

Biking

There's a trail along the old railroad track that starts at Hotel Ebeltoft just north of the town center. You can find out more about this track and get

a map at the Tourist Office. You can also take the road along the coast down to **Mols Bjerge** on the opposite side of the bay (see *Adventures on Foot*) and, if you keep going, you'll get to a small tongue of land known as **Helgenæs**, with the lighthouse at the end.

East of Ebeltoft is also worth exploring. You can for example bike your way to **Jernhatten**, an elevated area right on the coastline about seven km (4.2 miles) northeast of Ebeltoft with incredible views of the sea. Leave your bike at the foot of Jernhatten and walk the rest of the way.

> **Bike Rentals: LP Cykler & Maskiner**, Nørreallé 5, Ebeltoft, ☎ 86-344777, rents out bikes at reasonable prices.

❖ On Water

Canoeing

Many rivers in Djursland offer great opportunities for canoeing. One of those is **Alling River** in the western part of Djursland. The small town of **Allingåbro** is a good starting point. The company **Djursland for fuld Damp**, by the old train station, rents out canoes for 60 kr/$10 per hour or 250 kr/$42 for the whole day. Up to three people can fit in the same canoe.

Along the river you will find **Gammel Estrup**, one of the most famous manor houses in Jutland, just five km (three miles) from Allingåbro. Apart from the impressive building itself, there are two museums on the premises: the **Jutland Manor House Museum** and the **Danish Agricultural Museum**, which has one of the largest collections of farm machinery and farm implements in the world. The house is open every day in the summer between 10 am and 5 pm.

> **Tip:** Those who want to visit Gammel Estrup by car will have no trouble finding it just off Road 16 between Randers and Grenaa near Auning

For a longer tour on the Alling River, you can start your journey at **Sjellebro**, where the Sjellebro Rock, a well known

landmark in western Djursland, is located. If you choose to start here, the rental company **Djursland for fuld Damp** will charge an extra 100 kr/$17 per canoe for transportation from Allingåbro. Djursland for fuld Damp, Hovedgaden 4 (the Station) Allingåbro, ☎ 86-480444, is a train museum that not only rents canoes but also offers bike rentals, railway trolley rides and rides on an old steam train from Allingåbro to Randers.

❖ In the Air

Djursland has many interesting sights and a varying landscape; you can see most of it from above in a plane. The journey starts at the Århus Airport, which is at Tristrup along Road 15 halfway between Århus and Grenaa. From Århus just follow the signs for Ebeltoft and Grenaa on Road 15 and, after you pass the exit to Ebeltoft, follow the signs for the airport.

There are seven different options of shorter and longer trips in the Djursland and Århus area and prices range from 200 kr/$34 to 800 kr/$136. Flights are only offered in the summer between mid-June and mid-August from Thursday to Sunday.

For more information and bookings, ☎ 61-307737 or 23-440291.

Places to Stay & Eat

Apart from hotels, hostels, campsites and other typical types of accommodation, many people rent out houses or rooms in houses. The **tourist offices** in Grenaa, ☎ 87-581200, and Ebeltoft, ☎ 86-341400, can provide you with a long list and even help out with bookings.

Hotel Grenaa Strand, Havnepads 1, Grenaa, ☎ 86-326814, www.grenaastrand.dk, $$$. The perfect hotel for those who want to stay near the beach in Grenaa. This charming old hotel has a restaurant with great views and a comfortable atmosphere.

Hotel Ebeltoft Strand, Strandvej 3, Ebeltoft, ☎ 86-343300, www.ebeltoftstrand.dk, $$$. High quality hotel right on the beach at the Ebeltoft Bay and near the town center. There is a swimming pool, sauna and solarium on the premises. The res-

taurant, which specializes in seafood and offers both a lunch buffet and à la carte, should not be missed either.

Ebeltoft Hostel, Søndergade 43, Ebeltoft, ☎ 86-342053, $. On one of the main streets in the old town of Ebeltoft, the hostel is open all year except in December.

Grenaa Hostel, Ydesvej 4, Grenaa, ☎ 86-326622, $. This hostel, just outside the city of Grenaa, is more modern than most in Denmark.

The Islands

■ Funen

Introduction

Funen (Fyn in Danish) is the name of the island and county right in the middle of Denmark between Jutland and Sealand. The island is known as the garden of Denmark and one of the best times to visit is in the spring when cherry and apple trees are blossoming, covering the island in a sea of pink and white.

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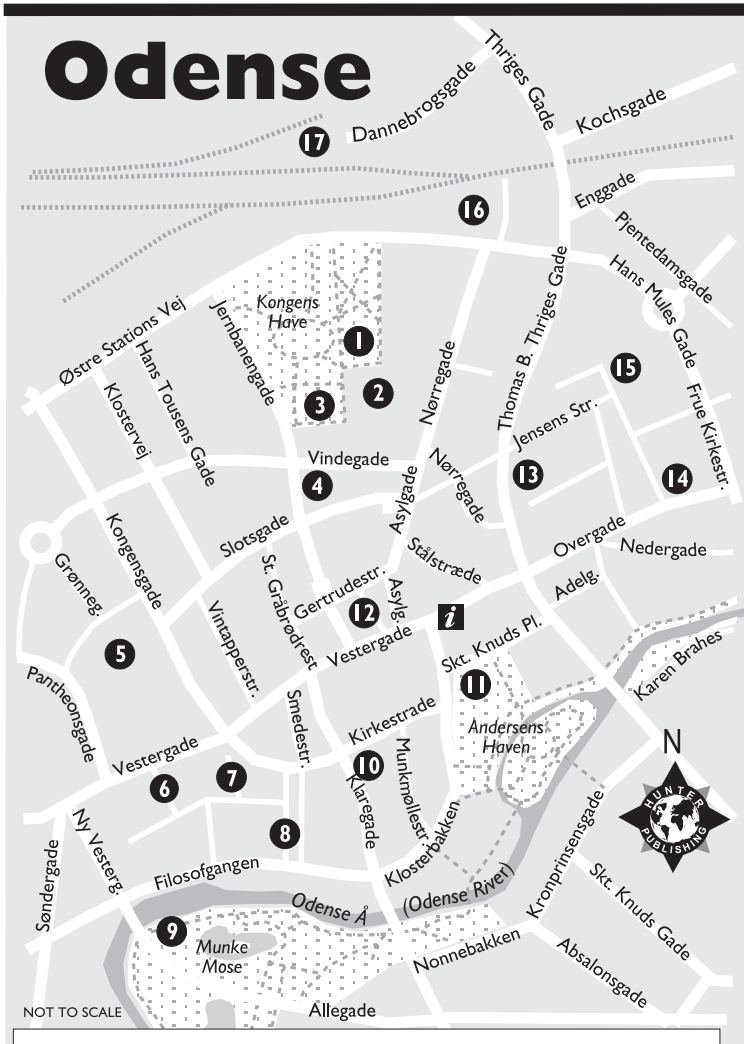
The county of Funen has approximately 90 smaller islands in addition to the main island, which is the second-biggest in Denmark after Sealand. **Odense**, in the north, is the capital, with 190,000 people, which makes it the third-biggest city in Denmark. The northern part of Funen is flat while the southern part is a little hillier and has the majority of Funen's 90 islands to the south. These islands are popular destinations for vacationers in the summer. The two biggest are **Ærø** and **Langeland** which technically belong to the county of Funen but, due to their sizes, are often mentioned separately.

Odense

Brief History

The history of the city can be traced back more than 1,000 years. Nobody knows exactly how old Odense is, but the city celebrated its millennium in 1988 based on a letter dated in 988, which is



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the earliest documented evidence of Odense's existence. The city probably existed even in the early years of the Viking Age, as the name Odense comes from the Viking God Oden.

The first church, **St. Albani Church**, was built around the turn of the first millennium at what is now known as Albani Square. **St. Knuds Cathedral** was built about 50 years later in honor of King Knut (sometimes spelled Canute in English), who was hunted down and slain inside St Albani Church by some angry farmers who didn't see eye-to-eye with the king on his new tax policy. Knut was canonized after his death and his body was buried in the cathedral named after him. This was an important event, not only for Odense but for all of Denmark, since Christianity became the official religion as a result. Odense and seven other cities in Denmark became bishoprics. Odense grew steadily over the centuries and, apart from its importance as a religious center, also became an important city of commerce.

In the beginning of the 19th century a canal was built connecting Odense with the sea about 22 km (13 miles) away. Shortly after, a harbor was built next to the city and this increased commerce tremendously.

❖ Hans Christian Andersen

The storyteller Hans Christian Andersen was born in Odense in 1805 and, although he lived most of his life in Copenhagen, there is no mistaking his real hometown when you visit Odense.

When the now world-famous writer was born, the city was the second-biggest in Denmark with 6,000 people. Odense was also a poor city and often referred to as "the city of beggars." Andersen himself grew up under poor circumstances and spent much of his childhood by himself, reading fairytales and other stories.

Odense was at the time the only city in Denmark besides Copenhagen with a theater and Andersen spent a great deal of time there, which triggered his interest. At age 14 he left home and went to Copenhagen where he wanted to pursue a career in acting.

Despite some setbacks in the beginning, he would eventually become successful, although not as an actor. Instead, he discovered his true calling in writing. Many of his stories had biographical elements and perhaps his most famous work today is the story of the ugly duckling.

Andersen was seen as ugly by many, including himself; he was a tall, lanky fellow, measuring 1.85 m (6 feet 1) at a time when the average height was about 1.60 m (5 feet 3).

Andersen spent a total of nine years abroad, traveling to find inspiration for his books and to meet interesting people. He became popular in England and was often invited to parties and balls when he visited. An Englishman who wasn't impressed with Andersen, however, was Charles Dickens. He invited him to stay at his house but became frustrated with the Dane's poor knowledge of English and found him quite boring.

Getting Here

Funen is an island with two straits, named the Little Belt and the Great Belt, separating it from Jutland to the west and Sealand to the east respectively. When the Great Belt Bridge was built in 1998, it saved a lot of time for travelers from Sealand who previously had to take the boat. The bridge itself is one of the longest suspension bridges in the world. While the considerably shorter Little Belt Bridge is free to cross, the Great Belt Bridge costs 300 kr/$51 for a one-way trip. It cost 37 billion kr/$6 billion to build and the money has to come from somewhere. The E20 Highway runs through the island between the two bridges and passes just outside Odense. Trains operate on the same stretch and connect Odense with all the bigger cities of Denmark. The Copenhagen International Airport in Kastrup is only one hour and 15 minutes away by train.

Getting Around

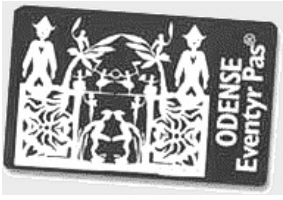
Buses will take you around Funen and you can find out more about timetables and routes on www.fynbus.dk, which is available in English. The bus station and train station in Odense are next to each other in the northern end of downtown.

Find out more on how to get around in southern Funen in the section about the Archipelago, page 421.

Practical Information

The **Odense Tourist Office**, ☎ 66-127520, is in the Odense Town Hall on Vestergade, the main shopping street in the city. They have plenty of information about the whole county of Funen.

THE ODENSE ADVENTURE PASS



The pass costs 110 kr/$18.70 (60 kr for children under age 14) for 24 hours and 150 kr/$25.50 (80 kr) for 48 hours and gives you free entrance to all the main museums and most popular attractions. You also get 25% discount on the river boat and *Svanen*, the fjord vessel (more about these trips under *Adventures on Water*). You can purchase the pass at the Tourist Office, train station, hotels and hostels.

Sightseeing

Sightseeing in Odense should be done on foot or by bike. Driving in the center is not easy, with several one-way streets and probably the biggest pedestrian area in Denmark in relation to the size of the city. The most notable pedestrian streets are **Kongensgade** and **Vestergade**, where, besides many shops and restaurants, you will also find sculptures depicting some of H.C. Andersen's tales. Throughout the entire city you will notice that Andersen

and his work is the ongoing theme. He is the most famous person to come out of Odense and in 2005 the bicentenary of his birth was celebrated throughout the country.

The town hall along Vestergade is where the **Tourist Office** is also located. Standing on the adjacent square with the town hall on your left you will have **St Knud's Cathedral** right in front of you. While Vestergade and the town hall area are good for shopping, the best sightseeing is about a 10-minute walk to the northeast where the **old town** of Odense is. Walking around in the old town is like taking a step back in time to the 19th century. The highlight of this quarter is the **H.C. Andersen Museum**.

Just across from the Odense Castle is **St Hans Church**, which is worth a visit. Odense played an important religious role in the Middle Ages and, if you look closely at this 15th-century church, you will see a unique pulpit placed on the outside of the building facing the street. The pulpit was used by monks in those days, when the crowds were so large they couldn't all fit inside the church.

One of the nicest walks in the city is along the Odense River, meandering through the southern section of town. You can start at the park near the cathedral and walk along the river until you get to ***Odense Aafart*** (river boat). The boat takes you down near **Den Fynske Landsby**, an open-air museum made to look like Odense in the 19th century (the era of H.C. Andersen). The boat doesn't take you all the way down; you have to walk the last 500 m (1,500 feet). If you have already been to (or if you are on your way to) Århus and its open-air museum, Den Gamle By, Den Fynske Landsby may seem a bit redundant. Besides, the old town in central Odense is itself like an open-air museum.

Adventures

❖ On Foot

The H.C. Andersen Museum

There are two Andersen houses in Odense. One is his childhood home, near St. Knud's Cathedral, where his family moved in 1807 and where Hans Christian lived from age two until he turned 14.

Unless you are a huge fan of Andersen, you can skip this small house and go directly to the H.C. Andersen Museum about a 10-minute walk from there.

The H.C. Andersen Museum is in the old town of Odense, which is worth a visit by itself. The museum in this house opened in 1908 and was completely renovated in 2004. You'll find an extensive collection of the writer's work, including books, drawings, pictures and much more; you can even listen to some of his stories in many different languages.

The exhibition also takes you into the old house where he was born and lived until the age of two, which is completely renovated and a lot more modern-looking than 200 years ago. Andersen himself never admitted that this actually was the house he lived in, claiming he was too young to remember and that his parents never told him about it. Historians speculate that he was probably too embarrassed by his poor upbringing.

H.C. Andersen Museum, Bangs Boder 29, ☎ 65-514601, www.odmus.dk. Admission, 50 kr/$8.50. Open daily in the summer 9 am-7 pm and Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-4 pm during the rest of the year.

H.C. Andersen Childhood Home, Munkemøllestræde 3-5. Admission, 10 kr/$1.70. Open daily in the summer 10 am-4 pm and Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-3 pm the rest of the year.

The Railway Museum

Of all the sights and attractions in Odense, the Danish Railway Museum is the most likely to be missed by visitors. One of the reasons is its location behind the train station, which means you will not just stumble upon it while walking around downtown; another might be that the idea of visiting a museum with old trains might not sound exciting.

But the Danish Railway Museum should not be missed.

Adventures

❖ On Wheels

Biking

There are endless opportunities for biking around Odense and northern Funen with its flat terrain. Odense has been named by the Traffic Ministry as the National Cycle City. You can buy a comprehensive biking map, covering the whole county, from the Odense Tourist Office for 75 kr/$12.75.

One really nice excursion you can make outside the city is around the **Odense Fjord** north of the city. Take Route 32 along the canal and continue up along the west side of the fjord to the narrowest point, Enebærodde, where the fjord meets the sea. From there you can take the boat *Svanen* across to the other side, which takes 20 minutes and costs 20 kr/$3.40. (*Svanen*, which departs from Odense Harbor, reaches Enebærodde on Wed-Fri at 1:10 pm, Sat at 11:10 am and Sun at 11:55 am.) Then follow the east side of the fjord along Route 43 until you are back in Odense.

❖ On Water

There are two boat tours you can take in Odense. One is with the river boat, *Odense Aafart* (www.aafart.dk), departing at Munke Mose, which is about a 10-minute walk from the city center along the Odense River. The ride on the river will take you past the Odense Zoo and ends not far from the open-air museum, the Funen Village. Boats depart every hour on the hour between 10 am and 5 pm in the summer, costing 35 kr/$6 for a single trip and 55 kr/$9.35 for a round-trip. Bikes are not allowed on the boats.

The other trip is with the boat *Svanen* (the swan), named after the bird in Andersen's story about the ugly duckling. This trip starts at the harbor and takes you around the Odense Fjord.

Places to Stay

Radisson SAS H.C. Andersen Hotel, Claus Bergs Gade 7, Odense, ☎ 66-147800, www.radisson.com/odensedk, $$$. Great location in the old town of Odense near the Andersen Museum. This four-star hotel is open every day of the year.

Ydes Hotel, Hans Tausens Gade 11, Odense, ☎ 66-121131, www.ydes.dk, $$. Low-budget hotel in downtown Odense.

Odense Hostel, Kragsbjergvej 121, Odense, ☎ 66-130425, $-$$. The only hostel in Denmark situated in a manor house, a 30-minute walk from downtown. You can stay in a dormitory room (150 kr/$ per night) or rent a single, double or family room for up to eight people.

Places to Eat

Den Grimme Ælling, Hans Jensens Stræde 1, Odense, ☎ 65-917030, $$$. Near the Andersen Museum in the old town, this restaurant offers Danish buffet for lunch and dinner. The name of the restaurant means "the ugly duckling" in English.

Den Gamle Kro, Overgade 23, Odense, ☎ 66-121433, $$$. This old inn is in a building from the 17th century, one of the oldest in the city.

Heading South from Odense

To get to southern Funen from Odense you can take Road 9 to Svendborg or Road 43 to Faaborg. Both cities are about 40 km (24 miles) from the county capital. If you take the road to Svendborg you should take a little detour after about 30 km (18 miles) and visit Egeskov Castle.

Egeskov Castle

Denmark is widely known for its many manor houses and castles situated all over the country. Funen is the geographical center of Denmark and could also be regarded as the center for manors and castles, with more than 100 of them. Egeskov, between Odense and Svendborg, is one of the most famous.

Egeskov has been privately owned for generations by the Ahlfeldt-Laurvig-Bille family, but much of it is accessible to the public. Most privately owned castles and manors, in fact, are open to the public in Denmark simply because it costs a lot of money to maintain them and the money from admissions is an important source of income for the owners.

Egeskov is easy to find just off the main road between Odense and Svendborg. Take a left at Kværndrup and you will see the towers almost immediately.

The castle was built in the mid-16th century on oak trunks in the middle of a lake. Supposedly, it required a whole forest of trunks and the word egeskov means oak forest in Danish.

Apart from the castle itself, there are also several museums on the premises, among them, an interesting museum of old vehicles such as cars, motorcycles and planes.

There are also 38 acres of parkland and forests around Egeskov. The parks are well known for their manicured hedges, some of which form mazes where you could spend too much of your vacation if you are not careful.

Egeskov is only open from May to September.

South Funen & the Archipelago

Svendborg on the south coast of Funen is often referred to as the gateway to the archipelago. It's the second-biggest city on Funen but, with 45,000 people, it's only about one quarter the size of Odense. This picturesque town has always been an important port since it was founded in the 13th century and even today the harbor plays a significant role as the starting point for visitors to the popular islands to the south.

The city itself is also worth stopping in for a few hours. **Anne Hvides House** in the town center is one of the oldest and best kept houses and has been made into a popular museum.

Tourist Information

The Tourist Office in Svendborg, ☎ 62-210980, is on Centrumpladsen 4 and is the central tourist information center for South Funen. It's open Monday-Saturday, even in the low-season.

Getting Around

Most islands in the archipelago can be reached by boat from Funen, either at Svendborg or Faaborg. Three of the islands have land connections, although two of them, **Thurø** and **Tåsinge**, are so close they seem more like districts in the city of Svendborg than separate islands. The third is **Langeland**, which is connected to Funen via Tåsinge.

There are also several ferries operating through **Scandlines**, ☎ 33-151515, www.scandlines.dk, among the smaller islands in the archipelago. The boats, called **Ærøfærgerne** (Ærø fer-

ries, ☎ 62-524000, take you to the island of Ærø from Faaborg, Svendborg and Rudkøbing (Langeland).

The Tourist Office offers bike rentals and several packages for bike excursions in the region. See *Adventures on Wheels* for more options.

Sightseeing in the Archipelago

Start your journey in Svendborg and make your way up the coast to **Faaborg**, which is 32 km (19 miles) west of Svendborg. The area around Faaborg is sometimes referred to as "the Alps of Funen," which is a gross exaggeration but the terrain does get considerably hillier and you'll get some incredible views of all the little islands scattered around in the sea below.

From Faaborg, take the ferry over to **Ærø** (60 minutes) and the village of **Søby**, one of the three ferry ports on Ærø. There you are not far from the main town on the island, **Ærøkøbing**, which can also be reached by ferry from Svendborg. Ærø is a fairly small island and only inhabited by about 8,000 people, but archaeological findings in burial grounds and elsewhere on the island tell us that people have lived on Ærø since prehistoric times. The tranquil and charming little town of Ærøkøbing is quite old as well, dating back to the 13th century. Walking around in the narrow cobbled streets among the colorful houses is a pleasant experience. The entire island of Ærø is flat and, although it's about the same distance across the island as it is from Svendborg to Faaborg, you will find this stretch to be a lot easier if you're going by bike.

From Ærøkøbing, continue east to **Marstal**, the biggest city on the island as well as the link to Langeland, the biggest island in South Funen. Marstal has a maritime museum worth visiting before you take the boat across to Rudkøbing on Langeland, which is about the same distance as from Faaborg to Søby.

Langeland, which means long land, is five times as long as it is wide (at the widest point) and gets invaded by tourists in the summer. Most come here for the sandy beaches but, like the other islands, it is also good for biking. While exploring the island, don't forget to stop by downtown **Rudkøbing**, Langeland's only city, before continuing on your journey.

From Rudkøbing the bridge takes you over to the island of **Tåsinge**, where the famous **Valdemar Castle** stands, near the town of Troense. The castle was built by King Christian IV for his son Valdemar, shown at right, and is now privately owned by the descendants of Niels Juhl, a famous admiral who was given the castle in thanks for his victory in the 1677 Battle of Køge against Sweden. Valdemar Castle is open to the public and features the **Castle and Manor House Museum** as well as an interesting toy museum.

Adventures

❖ On Water

Kayaking

Havkajakcenter Svenborg, Skaregårdsvej 9, Skovballe, Svendborg, ☎ 62-541920, www.havkajakcenter.dk, rents out boats and kayaks for excursions in the archipelago and also offer guided tours. Courses last anywhere from half a day up to a whole week and all guides are highly trained. Renting a kayak for one day costs 250 kr/$42.50 and for one week 1,250 kr/$90. You can also spend the night at the center for only 50 kr/$8.50 per night.

At **Surf Center Langeland**, Ristinge Harbor, Humble, ☎ 62-572040, you can try kitesurfing, waterskiing, kayaking or go on a guided diving and snorkeling safari.

Diving

Dive Center Langeland, Klæsøvej 4, Rudkøbing, ☎ 62-511444, is six km (3.6 miles) south of Rudkøbing. You can rent gear (prices start at 450 kr/$76.50) and take a course for a day, weekend or a whole week.

❖ **On Wheels**

Island Hopping by Car or Bike

Island hopping in the South Funen Archipelago with a bike is the best way to see as much of the area as possible and you can take the bike with you on the boats. If you are short on time and have access to a car, no problem. You can bring your car on the ferries connecting the bigger islands such as Ærø and Langeland.

Bike Rentals

Renting a bike at any of the places below costs 50-70 kr/$8.50-12 per day

The **Svendborg Tourist Office**, Centrumpladsen 4, ☎ 62-210980.

Svendborg Hostel, Vestergade, Svendborg 45, ☎ 62-216699.

Faaborg Tourist Office, Banegårdgspladsen 2, ☎ 62-610707.

Det Lille Hotel, Badstuen 15, Tåsinge, Svendborg, ☎ 62-225341.

Cultural Adventures

The area around **Gudme**, northeast of Svendborg, not far from the town of Lundeborg on the coast, is referred to by the local population as "the place where Denmark was founded." Several archeological findings have been made here dating back to the Iron Age and leading to the assumption that the first kings of Denmark lived here. The biggest building from this era ever found in Scandinavia is called Gudmekongens Hall, built in the fourth century AD. It's located just to the east of the Gudme municipality.

The island of Funen, particularly the southern region, was supposedly one of the first inhabited areas in Denmark along with southern Jutland. Ancient monuments such as stone formations can be seen all over the island dating as far back as the Neolithic era around 2500 BC. **Lykkesholm**, between Svendborg and Nyborg, is one such place where several burial grounds have been found. Burial gifts, for example knives, needles and razors, were found here, which made it possible to determine the age and usage for these monuments.

Places to Stay

Hotel Ærø Strand, Egehovedvej 4, Marstal, ☎ 62-533320, www.hotel-aeroestrand.dk, $$$. Modern upscale hotel just outside Marstal on eastern Ærø. Check with the hotel for special deals on weekends and longer visits.

Hotel Ærø, Brogade 1, Svendborg, ☎ 62-210760, www.hotel-aeroe.dk, $$$. Contrary to what the name implies, this hotel is not on the island of Ærø but in Svendborg. It's been around since 1870, situated by the harbor in a big yellow house.

Det Lille Hotel, Badstuen 15, Tronse, Svendborg, ☎ 62-225341, $$-$$$. Small and charming family hotel just outside Svendborg on the island of Tåsinge.

Langeland Camping and Motel, Spodsbergvej 277, Longelse, Rudkøbing, ☎ 70-203790, $-$$. About six km (3.6 miles) outside Rudkøbing. Motel, cabins and campground available. Only major credit card accepted is Visa. There is also a restaurant on the premises.

Ærøkøbing Camping, Sygehusvejen 40, Ærøkøbing, ☎ 62-521854, $-$$. The campsite, which is close to the beach, opens in May and closes in September. Cabins are equipped with shower, kitchen, TV and guests have access to a barbecue area.

HOTEL PRICES DENMARK	
For double room including taxes. For hostels with no double rooms, price is per bed in dormitory.	
$	Under 300 kr ($52)
$$	300-600 kr ($53-$106)
$$$	601-1,000 kr ($107-$172)
$$$$	Over 1,000 kr ($172)

Places to Eat

Lindelse Kro and Hotel, Langegade 21, Lindelse, Rudkøbing, ☎ 62-572403, $$$. Nice little inn just outside Rudkøbing with a good restaurant. They offer weekend packages and special deals on longer visits as well as discounts for senior citizens.

RESTAURANT PRICES DENMARK	
For one main course & a beverage, including taxes.	
$	Less than 75 kr ($12)
$$	75-150 kr ($12-$24)
$$$	151-200 kr ($25-$32)
$$$$	Over 200 kr ($32+)

Restaurant No 13, Brogade 13, Svendborg, ☎ 62-220795, $$. Cozy restaurant in the capital of South Funen.

■ Copenhagen

Introduction

Copenhagen (København in Danish), the capital and biggest city in Denmark, is on the eastern part of the island of Sealand. About 1.8 million people live in the greater Copenhagen area, which is about a third of the total population of Denmark. The international airport in Kastrup and the Öresund Bridge make the city a central point, not only for eastern Denmark, but for southwestern Sweden as well.

Sealand is the biggest island in Denmark and there are many things to see and do outside the city limits of Copenhagen. **Roskilde**, which used to be the capital of Denmark, is only a 30-minute drive away and has a lot of cultural history to offer. The drive to **Helsingør** on the coastal road is one of the most scenic in the region and is also a must while visiting the Danish capital.

Origin of the Name

Originally there was only a small settlement called Havn (harbor), but with the increased trading in the Middle Ages the name changed to Købmannehavn, which means "the merchant's harbor." It was later shortened to its current name København.

Brief History

Copenhagen was officially founded in 1167 when a bishop named **Absalon**, who is regarded as the city's founder, started building a castle where Christiansborg Castle is today. Absalon built the cathedral in Roskilde and later became the archbishop in Lund (in southern Sweden which used to belong to Denmark) at a time when the church and archbishop had more power and influence than the king. With the increased trading, Copenhagen, by the sea right in between Roskilde and Lund, had a perfect location for developing a new center for com-

merce. Copenhagen was also in the center of the kingdom at the time since southern Sweden, as we know it today, belonged to Denmark.

If Absalon was the founder of Copenhagen, **King Christian IV** was the creator. Christian was the ruler of Denmark from 1588 to 1648 and his accomplishments had a tremendous impact on the nation's capital than any other king in history. His vision was to make Copenhagen a modern city and one of the main centers of commerce in northern Europe, which is why he used Amsterdam as a template. King Christian IV is also responsible for many of the famous buildings and attractions you see in the city today, for example Rosenborg Castle, the Old Stock Exchange and the Round Tower just to name a few.

The 18th century in Copenhagen was characterized by misery and despair, with two major fires and a plague. The 19th century saw an upswing in the economy and overall standard of living with many new industries and the city expanded its border.

Before the 1860s, Copenhagen only consisted of the present city center, which was marked by city walls. Vesterport (the Western Gate), where the City Hall Square is now, and Østerport (the Eastern Gate), where Kongens Nytorv is today, were the main entrances for merchants who came to the city to trade their goods. In the 1860s the walls were torn down but the legacy is evident even today as **Strøget**, the biggest pedestrian shopping area in Scandinavia, is right in between these two former entrances to the city.

Getting Here

By Plane

Copenhagen International Airport at Kastrup on the island of Amager just east of the city center, is the main international airport for travelers to Denmark and to southern Sweden.

Getting from the airport to the city center is done quickly and easily. A train departs every 20 minutes and arrives at the Central Train Station about 13 minutes later. A one-way trip costs 25 kr/$4.25. If you'd rather take a taxi, expect to pay 150-180 kr/$25-30.

Rental Cars at Copenhagen Airport

Europ Car (www.europcar.com) . . . . ☎ 32-503090
Hertz (www.hertz.com) . . . . . ☎ 32-509300
Avis (www.avis.dk) . . . . . ☎ 32-512299
Budget (www.budget.com) . . . . . ☎ 32-523900

By Boat

Daily ferries with **DFDS Seaways**, ☎ 33-423000, www.dfdsseaways.com, depart from Oslo to Copenhagen via Helsingborg in Sweden. They take 16 hours. Costs are about 600 kr/$100 if traveling without a car; cars are about 300 kr/$50.

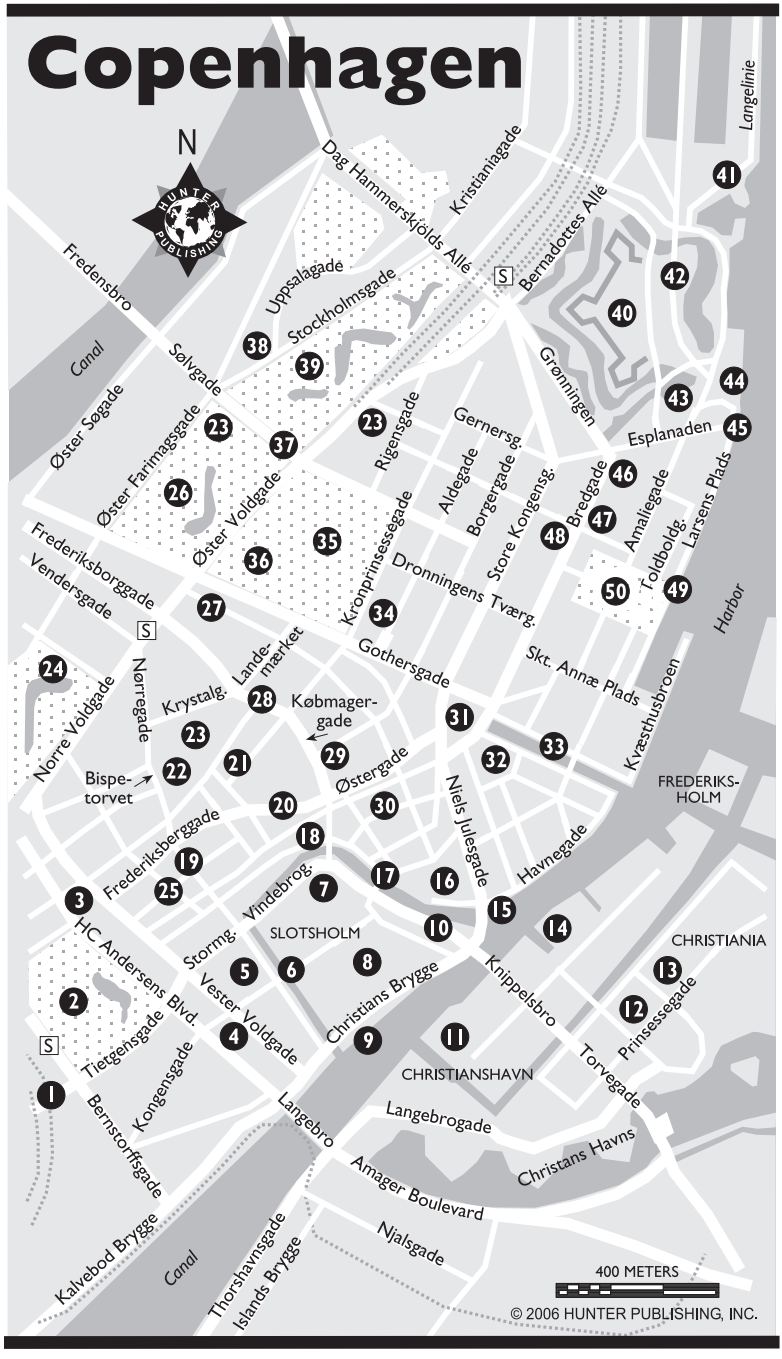
By Train

The **Central Train Station** is across from Tivoli and just a five-minute walk from the Tourist Office by the main entrance of Tivoli. There are train connections with all major cities in Denmark. Contact the Danish Railway Company, DSB, for time schedules and fares, ☎ 70-131415, www.dsb.dk.

From Norway and Sweden, there are direct lines from Oslo (via Gothenburg and Malmö in Sweden) and from Stockholm via Malmö. www.sj.se.

By Bus

Copenhagen has several connections with other cities in Europe through **Euro Lines Scandinavia**, ☎ 33-887000, www.eurolines.dk.


Copenhagen
N
HUNTER PUBLISHING
Fredensbro
Canal
Øster Søgade
Sølvgade
Dag Hammerskjölds Allé
Kristianiagade
Uppsalagade
Stockholmsgade
Bernadottes Allé
Langelinie
Grønningen
Esplanaden
Øster Farimagsgade
Øster Voldgade
Rigensgade
Gernersg.
Aldegade
Borgergade
Store Kongensg.
Bredgade
Amaliegade
Toldboldg.
Larsens Plads
Frederiksborgade
Vendersgade
Kronprinsessegade
Dronningens Tværg.
Harbor
Nørregade
Krystalg.
Landemærket
Gothersgade
Skt. Annæ Plads
Kvæsthusbroen
Norre Voldgade
Købmagergade
Bispetorvet
Østergade
Niels Juelsgade
FREDERIKSHOLM
Frederiksberggade
Havnegade
Vindebrog.
SLOTSHOLM
Stormg.
HC Andersens Blvd.
CHRISTIANIA
Vester Voldgade
Christians Brygge
Knippelsbro
Prinsessegade
Tietgensgade
Kongensgade
Torvegade
CHRISTIANSHAVN
Bernstorffsgade
Langebro
Langebrogade
Christians Havns
Amager Boulevard
Kalvebod Brygge
Canal
Thorshavnsgade
Islands Brygge
Njalsgade
400 METERS
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By Car

The express highway leading to Copenhagen from the south forks just before the city and you can either continue toward downtown or follow the signs to the Copenhagen International Airport, southeast of downtown.

If driving from Helsingør in northern Sealand to Copenhagen, you have the option of taking the more scenic Strandvejen

Copenhagen Key

CHURCHES
- 7. Christiansborg Palace Church (*Slotskirke*)
- 11. Christians Church
- 12. Church of Our Saviour
- 16. Royal Navy Church (*Holmens Kirke*)
- 20. Church of the Holy Ghost
- 22. Church of Our Lady
- 25. Domhuset
- 28. Trinity Church
- 30. St. Nicholas Church
- 43. St. Albans Church
- 47. St. Ansgar's Church
- 48. Alexander Nevsky Church; Marble Church (*Marmor Kirke*)

PALACES
- 7. Christiansborg Palace
- 32. Charlottenborg; Royal Theater
- 36. Rosenborg Palace
- 40. The Citadel (*Kastellet*)
- 50. Amalienborg Palace Complex; Amalienborgplads

MUSEUMS
- 4. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek
- 5. David's Collection
- 7. Thorvaldsen's Museum & Mausoleum
- 9. Royal Arsenal Museum
- 13. Royal Navy Museum
- 27. Musical History Museum
- 29. Museum Erotica
- 34. National Museum
- 37. Danish National Gallery
- 38. Hirschsprung Collection
- 43. Museum of Danish Resistance
- 46. Museum of Decorative Arts
- 49. Royal Cast Museum

GARDENS & PARKS
- 2. Tivoli Gardens
- 4. Winter Garden
- 24. Orstedsparken
- 26. Botanic Gardens (*Botanisk Have*)
- 35. King's Garden (*Kongens Have*); Rosenborg Garden
- 39. Østre Anlæg
- 42. Churchill Park

HISTORIC SITES
- 1. Central Station
- 3. Town Hall Square
- 6. Marble Bridge; Stables; Royal Theater Museum
- 8. Royal Library
- 10. Old Børsen
- 14. Old Dock (*Gammel Dok*)
- 15. Malmö Ferry Dock: Hydrofoil (*Flyvebådene*)
- 16. National Bank
- 17. Holmens Canal & Bridge
- 18. Gammel Strand; Højbro Bridge
- 19. Gammeltorv; Nytorv
- 20. Strøget
- 21. Grey Friars' Square
- 23. University (3 Locations)
- 28. Round Tower (*Rundeturn*)
- 31. Kongens Nytorv
- 33. Nyhavn; Nyhavn Bridge
- 41. Little Mermaid; *Langelinie*
- 44. Gefion Fountain; *Nordre Toldbold*
- 45. Royal Barge

S S-Train Stations
..... Rail Lines

along the sea, which takes about 30 minutes longer than the highway but it's definitely worth it (see *Excursions from Copenhagen*, pages 445 ff).

From Sweden, the Øresund Bridge, completed in 2000, takes you across Øresund, the sound separating Denmark from Sweden, in only 10 minutes. All payments are made on the Swedish side, where you have to pay a toll of 230 kr/$39 (280 Swedish kr). You can pay in many different currencies or by credit card. (Find out all you need to know about the bridge under *Getting Around* in the *Introduction to Scandinavia*, page 42).

Getting Around

By Car

Driving in Copenhagen should be avoided. Parking is a problem in the city, both when it comes to finding spaces and for the high fees, although recent changes have improved the situation. The best place to park is outside the city center, for example in the Bro-districts: Vesterbro, Nørrebro and Østerbro (see *Orientation* and *Sightseeing*), where it's cheaper and easier to find spaces. From there you can take public transportation into the center.

The speed limit in the city center is 40 kph as opposed to the general speed limit of 50 kph in urban areas.

By Boat

The **Water Bus** navigates along and between the islands of Sealand and Amager. You can also get to Holmen where the Opera House is located. The Water Bus departs from Nyhavn. ☎ 33-423320, www.canaltours.com.

By Bike

This is the best way of getting around in the city center if you want to combine transportation with sightseeing, at least in the summer. Most attractions are within easy reach of each other and you risk missing several if you take other means of transporta-

tion. You can borrow a bike by depositing a 20 kr/$3.40 coin at one of the stands in the city center and can use it within the city center and Christianshavn. You cannot take it outside this border; if the police catch you with the bike in one of the adjacent districts of the city or beyond, you will be fined 1,000 kr/$170. There are over 100 stands spread out in the center and the bikes are available from May to December. For biking outside the designated area, or during the months when the city-bikes are not available, there are three bike rental shops in the city. All three have similar rates, about 60-75 kr/$10-13 for one day.

Københavns Cykler, Reventlowsgade 11, ☎ 33-338613, www.copenhagen-bikes.dk, is by the Central Train Station.

Københavns Cykelbørs, Gothersgade 157, ☎ 33-140717, www.cykelboersen.dk, is near the Rosenborg Castle.

Østerport Cykler, Oslo Plads 9, ☎ 33-338513.

By Rickshaw

Not exactly a typical Scandinavian form of transportation, but a rickshaw can be a fun way to get around and explore Copenhagen if the weather is nice. As with a cab, you can stop an available rickshaw if you see one coming your way. Otherwise, go to the City Hall Square, Nyhavn, Nørreport Station or Tivoli, where they normally gather.

Copenhagen Rickshaw, ☎ 35-430122, www.rickshaw.dk.

Københavns Cykeltaxi, ☎ 70-360055, www.cykeltaxi.com.

By Bus, Train & Metro

The Metro was introduced to Copenhagen in 2002 to complement the already well established network of public transportation. The same tickets can be used for all three forms of transportation and can be purchased at the stations or onboard buses. Fares vary depending on how many zones you are traveling through. A two-zone ticket costs 17 kr/$2.89 and should be sufficient if you are only traveling inside the center. Ask the

staff at the stations before buying a ticket to be sure, or you might get fined.

> **Tip:** The **Copenhagen Card** gives you free access to all public transportation in the city.

For more information about timetables and fares:

- Buses, ☎ 36-131415.
- Trains, ☎ 33-141701.
- Metro, ☎ 70-151615.

> **Warning:** The authorities in Copenhagen are pretty strict when it comes to traffic violations. For travel on the Metro without a valid ticket, you will be fined 500 kr/$85. If you get caught outside the limits with a city-bike, you will be fined 1,000 kr/$170. For jaywalking, you will pay 700 kr/$119.

Orientation & Sightseeing

The City Center

The compact city center will give the impression that Copenhagen is smaller than it actually is. Compared to Stockholm, which is about the same size, Copenhagen's downtown area is much more compressed. When most people visit Copenhagen, they spend 90% or more of their time in the city center; understandable, considering that this is where you will find about 90% of the city's attractions.

The **City Hall Square (Rådhuspladsen)** is a good place to start a tour of the city, in the southern part of the city center just a stone's throw from the Central Train Station and the Tourist Office. On one side of the square you have the amusement park, **Tivoli**, and on the other side is Strøget, one of the longest pedestrian streets in Europe.

Tivoli Gardens is the big amusement park in the center of Copenhagen, between the City Hall and the Central Train Station and was founded in the mid-19th century.

Today it's one of the most popular attractions in Denmark but, unless you are traveling with kids, it shouldn't be at the top of

your list of things to see. In many ways, Bakken, north of Copenhagen, is a much better amusement park (more about Bakken under *Excursions from Copenhagen*) Nevertheless, Tivoli still has a lot to offer, with 32 restaurants, 400,000 flowers and 110,000 lamps, in addition to all the rides. Tivoli also puts on several concerts in the summer and it's worth contacting the park to see if your favorite artists will be performing when you are in town.

Tivoli Gardens, Vesterbrogade 3, ☎ 33-151001, www.tivoli.dk. The park is open daily from mid-April until the end of September, 11 am until 11 pm or 1 am (depending on season). Entrance is 75 kr/$12.75 for adults and 40 kr/$6.80 for children.

❖ Strøget

Strøget is actually a combination of several streets linked together to form a three-km (1.8-mile) pedestrian street between City Hall Square and the other big square called Kongens Nytorv.

If you start from the square, Frederiksberggade (by the Burger King) is the street where you enter Strøget. After a couple of blocks you will get to an area with two squares on either side, **Gammeltorv** and **Nytorv** (the Old Square and the New Square). Gammeltorv is the oldest square in the city, functioning as a marketplace even before the city itself was founded. Nytorv is much newer, created by Christian IV in the 17th century. The building in the back of Nytorv was once the city hall before the present one was built about 100 years ago and the building at Nytorv was turned into a court house.

The next two streets on Strøget are Nygade and Vimmelskaftet, after which you get to **Amagertorv**, the central point which, despite the name, looks more like a wide street than a square.

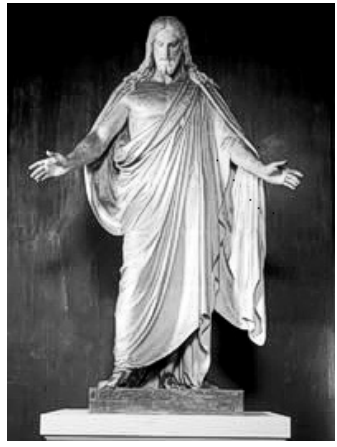
You can read more about what Strøget has to offer under *Shopping*.

❖ The Latin Quarter & the Cathedral

The Latin Quarter is the area just north of Strøget. Take a left on one of the side streets of Frederiksberggade and you'll find yourself in the middle of it. Most of the buildings in the Latin Quarter are from the beginning of the 19th century, but hardly any are older since the British navy bombarded the

entire area during the Napoleonic Wars, using the tall spire of the cathedral as the aiming point.

The cathedral, **Vor Frue Kirke**, is the most famous building in the Latin Quarter and should be visited, mostly for the impressive sculpture inside.



The first cathedral was built on this spot in the early 13th century but had to be rebuilt several times, twice due to the disastrous fires Copenhagen endured in the 18th century. The current version of the cathedral was built in 1829 following the previously mentioned bombings by the British Navy. Bertel Thorvaldsen, the famous Danish sculptor, created the 12 apostles, and placed six on each side, outside the pews. Another interesting feature is the pulpit – placed on the side, rather than in front. Each pew therefore has two sets of seats, facing in opposite directions, so the parish can see the priest whether he is preaching at the front or in the pulpit.

The cathedral is still actively used for all kinds of ceremonies. In 2004 the royal wedding between Prince Frederik and Mary Donaldson took place here. Coronations were also held here until 1840 when that tradition was abolished in Denmark.

Across from the cathedral is **Copenhagen University** and, if you're standing in between the two buildings and walk the pedestrian street St. Kanikestræde, you'll get to **Købmagergade**, the wide shopping street connected to Strøget by Amagertorv.

❖ The Round Tower

The Round Tower (Rundetårn), on Købmagergade, is one of the most fascinating buildings in the city. It was built by King Christian IV, initially intended to fill three functions: an observatory, a student church and the university library. Today it provides an excellent view from the top, popular with visitors, but still functions as an observatory – making it the oldest of its kind in Europe. The architecture is unique, especially on the inside. A spiral walk of 209 m (600 feet), which

includes seven turns around the tower, leads up to the top, where you get a panorama view of the entire city center and Øresund in the background. When Czar Peter the Great visited here he took his horse and carriage all the way up, possibly because he was too lazy to walk.

❖ Slotsholmen

Christiansborg Castle is on the small island of Slotsholmen between Strøget and Christianshavn. This is the area originally called Havn when the city was first founded and Bishop Absalon built his castle where Christiansborg now stands. The castle we see today was completed in 1928 and is the third Christiansborg after the previous two were ruined in fires; the original was built around 1740. Today, the castle is home to the Danish Parliament (Folketinget), the Queen's Rooms, the Prime Minister's office and the Supreme Court. Look up at the tower on top of the building. This is where the new kings and queens are introduced to the people. The latest introduction ceremony took place in 1972 when Queen Margrethe was announced as the new queen of Denmark.

Next to Christiansborg is the **Old Stock Exchange**, the oldest building of its kind in the world. Outside the building is a statue of King Fredrik VII, who signed the first democratic constitution on June 5, 1849, which is celebrated annually as Constitution Day in Denmark.

If you walk across the canal past Holmen Church and the street named Holmens Kanal, you will soon get to the **Royal Theater**. According to legend, this is where H.C. Andersen during his first years in Copenhagen as a struggling young actor was laughed off the stage in an audition for the ballet.

Just across the street from the theater is **Kongens Nytorv** (the King's New Square), which is the biggest square in the city with Strøget on one side and Nyhavn with its canal on the other. The **Nyhavn Canal** was created about 300 years ago and Nyhavn was for many years considered a rough neighborhood, occupied by sailors and prostitutes. Today, it's the most popular area in the city to hang out in the summer, with open-air cafés outside the colorful houses lined up along the canal. Many of the best pubs and restaurants in Copenhagen are right here. You can also take a boat tour, which departs here (see *Guided Tours*).

From Kongens Nytorv, walk down Nyhavn on the left side and take the street named Toldobdgade, which takes you to the **Amalienborg Castle**.

Amalienborg

Amalienborg is the official winter residence of the royal family. It was built in the mid-18th century after Christiansborg was destroyed in a fire. As you enter the square from Toldbodgade you will see four almost identical buildings. The first to your left is where the queen lives today. Every day at 12 noon the changing of the guard takes place in the courtyard and, if the marching band is playing at the same time, you'll know that the queen is home. On her birthday in April, about 20,000 Danes gather in the courtyard to celebrate.

The guards, by the way, are not just there for show. They are part of the military and their duty is to protect the queen and her family and they will do so at any cost. Their weapons are filled with live ammo at all times and you are discouraged from approaching within five feet of them.

Standing at the Amalienborg courtyard, with Todbodgade and the adjacent park behind you, you'll see the grand round marble-church, **Frederikskirken**, right in front of you across the street. Construction began around the same time as the Royal Palace was started, but marble was quite expensive and they had to make a choice between completing the church or Amalienborg. They chose the latter and the church was not finished until almost 150 years later.

While visiting Amalienborg, don't forget to pay the park a visit on the other side of Toldbodgade toward the sea. From here you get a great view of the grand new opera house building on the other side of the water.

Farther up along the water after about a 10-minute walk, you will pass the citadel on your left, then will get to one of the most famous landmarks in all of Denmark, the **Little Mer-**

maid, one of the most photographed statues in the world. The mermaid was built in 1913 inspired by the H.C. Andersen story. Over the years, she has been beheaded twice and once lost an arm due to vandalism but was fully restored every time. To be fair, the statue itself isn't all that impressive to look at and most people probably come here mainly because they can't leave Copenhagen without having seen one of the city's main attractions. You will actually walk past a much more imposing statue on your way to the mermaid, right next to the citadel, of the goddess Gefion and her bulls in the middle of a fountain.

Rosenborg Castle by the lush park **Kongens Have** was built by Christian IV and used as his summer residence. The castle hasn't been inhabited for several centuries and it contains an extensive collection on Danish royal and cultural history, most notably the Crown Jewels. You can also obtain more information about Christian IV than you ever needed to know, but the castle and park are definitely worth a visit, especially in the summertime. If the garden doesn't impress you enough, the **Copenhagen Botanical Garden** is across the street.

The Adjacent Districts

❖ Christianshavn & Amager

The eastern part of downtown Copenhagen consists of Christianshavn and the island of Amager just south of it. Amager is visited by many foreign tourists since this is where you'll find Kastrup and the Copenhagen International Airport. Most people choose not to spend more time than necessary around Kastrup but, for those who do, there's a town in the south named **Dragør** which is well worth visiting.

Vor Frelsers Kirke

Christianshavn is one of the oldest parts of the city, named after and built by King Christian IV, who wanted a bigger port for the increased traffic. One of the attractions in this district is **Vor Frelsers Kirke** (Our Savior's Church), easily recognizable with its narrow round copper tower. You can climb up the stairs to the top on the outside of the tower (if you dare). The **Opera House**, inaugurated in 2004, is on Holmen, just north of Chritianshavn, and was donated by Mærsk, one of the biggest transportation companies in Scandinavia. There was much controversy regarding the architecture of the building, criticized for its exterior design by some, while certain members of the orchestra were concerned about the acoustics.

One of the neighborhoods in Christianshavn is **Christiania**, which has a unique history of its own. Christiania was in the 1970s declared a Freetown by its own people, mostly hippies who wanted their own city within the city. The government, of course, wasn't happy about this and tried to put an end to it for several years. One of the main reasons opponents have been against Christiania has been drug traffic and criminality.

Today, Christiania is no more dangerous than any other area of Copenhagen and it's one of the most popular places to visit. It's fun and interesting, not because of its history but because it has lots of shops and an atmosphere you won't find in any other district in Copenhagen.

Tours of Christiania are offered daily in the high season at 3 pm and on Saturdays and Sundays only at the same time during the rest of the year. Although it's safe to walk around during the day, you should avoid visiting at night and visitors are advised not to take pictures on Pusher Street.

❖ The Bro-Districts

Originally, when Copenhagen only consisted of what we today call the city center, the city was bordered by a wall with three entrances, called Vesterport, Østerport and Nørreport (port is Danish for gate). In the 19th century, when the city expanded, the wall was torn down and the districts of Vesterbro, Østerbro and Nørrebro were designated in the areas beyond the respective gates. **Vesterbro** can be reached by following Vesterbrogade from the City Hall Square, where you will pass the Tourist Office on your right and Tivoli, the popular amusement park, on your left.

Just north of Vesterbro is **Frederiksberg**, which could be considered a part of downtown but technically it's a different

municipality and therefore not a part of Copenhagen. Nevertheless, the **Copenhagen Zoo** is here, next to the big park called Frederiksberg Have, a popular area for residents to spend the afternoon, especially on hot summer days.

Past Fredriksberg is **Nørrebro**, which can also be reached from the city center by taking Frederiksborggade in the pedestrian zone via Nørreport, one of the old city gates, and crossing the Dronning Louise's Bridge. In Nørrebro you will find the **Assistens Cemetery**, where some of the most famous Danes in history are buried, for example H.C. Andersen and Søren Kirkegaard.

Directly north of the city center is **Østerbro**. It can be reached by taking Øster Voldgade, which goes past the Rosenborg Castle. Østerbro is mostly residential and much quieter than Nørrebro and Vesterbro.

Practical Information

The main **Tourist Office**, ☎ 70-222442, is on the corner of Vesterbrogade and Bernstorffsgade between the main entrance of Tivoli and the Central Train Station.

The **Youth Information Center**, Rådhusstræde 13, ☎ 33-730620, is a short walk from Strøget and a good place to go for information on low-budget alternatives, but also for tips in general about shopping, nightlife and city life.

THE COPENHAGEN CARD

The Copenhagen Card gives you free entrance or discounts at most attractions in the greater Copenhagen area and free public transportation. The card can be purchased at tourist offices, train stations, the airport and many hotels and campsites. The 24-hour card costs 199 kr/$33.80; the 72-hour card, 399 kr/$67.80.

You also get free transportation all over north Sealand, including the counties of Roskilde and Frederiksborg. You can take advantage of that when you go on one of the trips mentioned under *Excursions from Copenhagen*, page 445.

Guided Tours

By Bus

The **Grand Tour of Copenhagen** is a 2½-hour bus tour that takes you around the entire downtown area with all its major landmarks. In addition, there are a few other shorter bus tours concentrating on more specific areas, such as the harbor for example. The Grand Tour is the only guided bus tour operating year-round and buses depart daily from the City Hall Square at 11 am, with an extra departure on Saturdays at 1:30 pm from October 1 to April 30.

The price is 195 kr/$33 for adults (90 kr/$15 for children under 12); pre-booking is not necessary. For more information about all bus tours in the city, ☎ 32-660000, www.sightseeing.dk.

By Boat

There are two companies to choose from if you want to take a guided tour on the canal around the city. Each tour lasts 50-60 minutes.

DFDS Canal Tours, ☎ 32-963000, www.canaltours.com, depart daily from Nyhavn and Gammel Strand every half-hour between 10 am and 5 pm from April to mid-October (10 am to 7:30 pm in the summer) and Saturdays 10 am-4 pm from mid-October to mid-December. Price: 50 kr/$8.50.

The Netto Boats, ☎ 32-544102, www.netto-baadene.dk, depart from the Holmen Church (opposite the old Stock Exchange) and Nyhavn at Heibergsgade daily two to five times per hour, April to October, from 10 am-5 pm (July-August 10 am-7 pm. Price: 30 kr/$5.

Shopping

During shopping hours, **Strøget** is filled with people year-round, no matter what the weather is doing. It's the area where all tourists end up eventually at some point in their visit to Copenhagen. Finding what you are looking for won't take long on these streets between the City Hall Square and Kongens Nytorv.

There are many side-streets to Strøget worth checking out, especially **Købmagergade**, linked to Strøget by Amagertorv.

Strædet is the name for the streets running parallel to Strøget. Walk down one block (in the opposite direction of Købmagergade) on any of the side-streets between Nytorv and Amagertorv on Strøget. The streets on Strædet are much narrower, less crowded and often much cheaper (but not necessarily).

A good area for shopping, which many tourists don't know about, is toward the Amalienborg Castle. Here you will find **Bredgade** and **St. Kongensgade**, two streets that parallel each other, which can be reached from two corners of Kongens Nytorv. You are only a stone's throw from Strøget but will find many stores and boutiques that are just as good and often with much better prices.

When it comes to **shopping centers** on Strøget, there is **Illum** on Østergade and **Magasin du Nord** at the big square called Kongens Nytorv. In the outskirts, about a 20-minute walk from Strøget, you have **Fisketorvet**, quite new and modern with more than 100 shops, several restaurants and movie theaters.

> **Note:** General **business hours** for shops in the city are: Monday-Thursday 10 am-6 pm, Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-6 pm or 7 pm, closed Sundays.

Adventures

On Foot

❖ Carlsberg Brewery Tour

Carlsberg was founded in 1847 by J.C. Jacobsen and was named after his son, Carl, who eventually established his own company, Ny (New) Carlsberg, which made J.C. change the name of his company to Gamle (Old) Carlsberg. The company, which now also includes Tuborg, another well known Danish brand, has grown into one of the biggest breweries in the world.

Ny Carlsberg has a huge factory in Valby just south of the city center, right next to where the Gamle Carlsberg Brewery was built. In 1999, a visitor's center opened at the Gamle Carlsberg Brewery. You can watch the production line of the

newly established Jacobsen Brewery from above in the new tour at Gamle Carlsberg. The best part of the tour in the old brewery is to learn all the history behind beer production and the Carlsberg factory. The new and improved tour is much more extensive than the old one, with a more hands-on exhibition. It also includes a virtual reality show at the end and the Carlsberg Bar where every visitor gets free samples, two bottles each, of this fine Danish beer.

Besides visiting the museum and visitor's center you should also walk around the brewery on Ny Carlsberg Vej and see the impressive Elephant Gate, with an elephant on each side guarding the entrance.

Carlsberg Visitor Center, Gamle Carlborgs Vej 11, Valby, ☎ 33-271314. You can get there by taking Bus 26 to Valby-Ålholm Plads from the City Hall Square.

❖ On Water

Go on a kayak tour with **Copenhagen Adventure Tours**, ☎ 40-504006, www.kajakole.dk. Tours, led by professional guides, depart from Gammel Strand and last 1½ to three hours.

Cultural Adventures

Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Dantes Plads 7, ☎ 33-418141, next to Tivoli Gardens along H.C. Andersen Boulevard, has been around for a century. When the museum opened, the entire collection came from Carl Jacobsen, the owner of Ny Carlsberg Brewery and founder of the Glyptotek, who had a real passion for art. The brewery financed the construction of the building and still maintains it today. So whenever you consume a Carlsberg or Tuborg beer you can say that you support Danish culture (if you need to justify your consumption).

"Glyptotek" means sculpture collection and there is an impressive collection of statuary, but the museum consists of much more than that. There are two main areas; one consists of art from French and Danish artists, the other of works from the Mediterranean.

Museums of History

There are two excellent museums in downtown Copenhagen that focus on the rich history of Copenhagen and Denmark respectively. The **National Museum**, a two-minute walk

from the City Hall Square, takes you through the entire history of Denmark from prehistory through the Viking Age and the introduction of Christianity to the modern era. The collection is impressive, with thousands of items, large and small, displayed on three different floors. You could spend the entire day in here if you wanted to but you should allow at least n hour and a half for your visit. The National Museum, Ny Vestergade 10, ☎ 33-134411, www.natmus.dk, is open all year Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-5 pm (closed Mondays). Admission is 25 kr/$, except Wednesdays when you get in free (only to the permanent exhibition).

The **City Museum**, in Vesterbro, about a 10-minute walk down Vesterbrogade from the City Hall Square, explores the city's intriguing history, from the beginning when Bishop Absalon started building his castle, to the city you see in front of you today. The pictures and models here give a much more vivid idea of the history of Copenhagen than you will ever get from reading about it in a book. The City Museum is considerably smaller than the National Museum but has so many different displays, both permanent and temporary, that you might find yourself spending as much time here as you did there. The City Museum, Vesterbrogade 59, ☎ 33-210772, www.bymuseum.dk, is open Wednesday-Monday 10 am-4 pm during the high season and 1 am-4 pm during the low season (closed Tuesdays). Admission is 20 kr/$5.40, with free entrance every Friday.

Places to Stay

Hotel D'Angleterre, Kongens Nytorv 34, ☎ 33-120095, www.remmen.dk, $$$$. This 200-year-old hotel has been named the best in Scandinavia and is definitely the most exclusive in Copenhagen.

Copenhagen Mercure Hotel, Vester Farimagsgade 17, ☎ 33-125711, $$$ .The only hotel in the city with a tennis court on the premises available to the guests.

Hotel Triton, Helgolandsgade 7-11, ☎ 33-313266, $$$. This three-star hotel is near the Tivoli Gardens and the Central Train Station

Copenhagen Hostel, H.C. Andersens Boulevard 50, ☎ 33-118585, $-$$. This new five-star hostel with 700 beds opened in downtown Copenhagen in the summer of 2005, making it the biggest city-hostel in Europe. It's in the Europahuset building, one of the tallest in the city, a 10-minute walk from the Central Train Station and one minute from Tivoli. Most rooms have their own private bathroom with shower and a great view over the city. Price for one bed is 120 kr/$20.

HOTEL PRICES DENMARK	
For double room including taxes. For hostels with no double rooms, price is per bed in dormitory.	
$	Under 300 kr ($52)
$$	300-600 kr ($53-$106)
$$$	601-1,000 kr ($107-$172)
$$$$	Over 1,000 kr ($172)

Places to Eat

DINE WITH THE DANES

What better way to enjoy a typical Danish meal than in the company of native Danes. This can be arranged for you. Find out more by visiting www.dinewithdanes.dk.

Restaurant Gammel Strand, Gammel Strand 42, ☎ 33-912121, $$$$. An expensive place and you pay partly for the view, which is especially good from the open-air section. Mostly known for its fish.

Brew Pub, Vestergade 29-31, ☎ 33-320060, $$$. A pub and restaurant, near the City Hall Square and Strøget, with a Danish/French kitchen.

Café Sorgenfri, Brolæggerstræde 8, ☎ 33-115880, $$. A really good place to enjoy a smørrebrød, the characteristic Danish open sandwich.

Ida Davidsen, Store Kongens Gade 70,

RESTAURANT PRICES DENMARK	
For one main course & a beverage, including taxes.	
$	Less than 75 kr ($12)
$$	75-150 kr ($12-$24)
$$$	151-200 kr ($25-$32)
$$$$	Over 200 kr ($32+)

☎ 33-913655, $$. One of the most famous smørrebrød places in Copenhagen.

Excursions from Copenhagen

To Helsingør along the Coastal Road

Getting to Helsingør in the northeastern part of Sealand from Copenhagen only takes about 30 minutes on the express highway; however, by taking that route you will be missing a great journey along the coast on the road known as **Strandvejen** (the Beach Road). Strandvejen takes nearly twice as long to Helsingør as the highway (non-stop) but you should allow for several more hours, ideally the whole day, to take in all the sights and adventures this 40-km (24-mile) stretch has to offer.

As you exit Østerbro, the northern district of downtown Copenhagen, you will soon reach **Charlottenlund** where **Denmark's Aquarium** is located. The aquarium is certainly not one of the must-see attractions along Strandvejen but it's worth a visit especially on a rainy day. If the weather is good, on the other hand, you should instead stop at **Bakken** near Klampenborg a little farther north. Bakken is a 400-year-old amusement park, making it the oldest in the world, and it opens from early April to late August. Those who missed Tivoli in Copenhagen get a second chance here. Entrance is free at Bakken and a day-pass for the attractions is cheaper than at Tivoli. In a way, Bakken is a better park since it's out in the countryside in a more tranquil environment, away from the city pulse.

About half-way between Copenhagen and Helsingør is **Rungsted**, an old fishing village where there was once a famous inn, established by King Christian II in the 16th century. The inn was eventually made into a private home and one of Denmark's most famous writers, **Karen Blixen**, grew up in the house in the late 19th century, living there for long periods of her adult life as well. She also spent many years in Africa and her most famous work, at

least to later generations, was the book based on her experiences there – ***Out of Africa***. The book became popular when it was made into a movie some 50 years later. Blixen's home was made into a museum in the early 1990s and is decorated the way it was when she was still living there. Outside the house there's a big park which is also a bird sanctuary, well worth taking a stroll in if the weather allows it.

The next two reasons to stop along Strandvejen before we reach Helsingør are two art **museums**. First off is **Nivågard** in the village of Nivå, famous for its 16th-century Italian and 17th-century Dutch paintings. Among them is the only Rembrandt on public display in Denmark.

Just a short drive north from Nivå is Humlebæk where Louisiana is located.

❖ Louisiana Museum

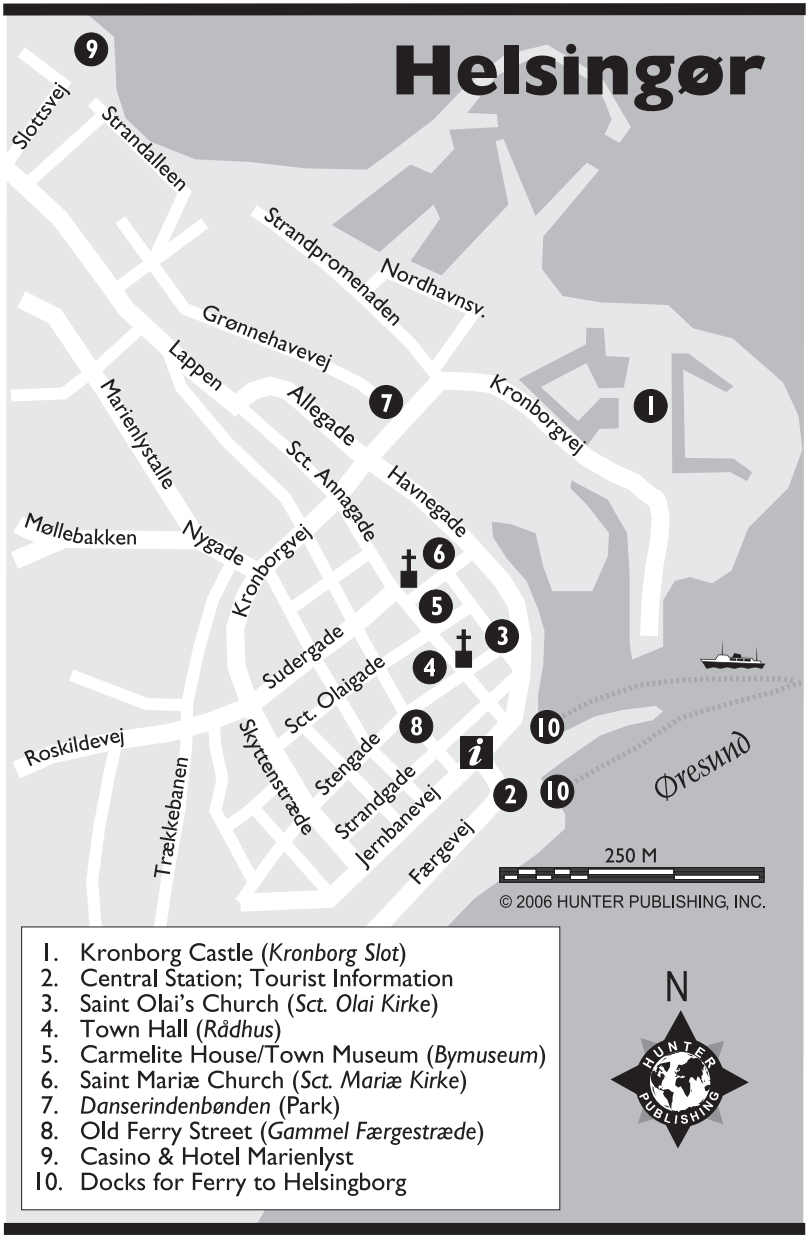
Louisiana is the most visited art museum in Denmark which is not hard to understand when you get there. Apart from being one of the best museums for contemporary art in Scandinavia, it has an excellent location with a great view of Øresund and beautiful surrounding park areas. It's only a short drive from Copenhagen and it's also a popular daytrip for many Swedes since it takes less than an hour from either Malmö or Helsingborg across Øresund to get here.

Louisiana has been developed in stages since it was inaugurated in the 1950s. It was founded by Knud Jensen, who put up his private collection, which has since been expanded several times over the years. It now has an extensive permanent collection and always intriguing temporary exhibitions that last a few months before they're changed.

Louisiana, Gl. Strandvej 13, Humlebæk, ☎ 49-190719, is open every day of the year except December 24, 25 and 31 from 10 am to 5 pm and until 10 pm on Wednesdays. Call or visit www.louisiana.dk to find out which exhibition is showing when you will be there.

❖ Kronborg Castle

Kronborg is today one of the most impressive Renaissance castles in northern Europe. It was built on the ruins of on old castle named Krogen, constructed by the union king, Erik of Pomerania, in the 15th century to control the traffic in and out of the Baltic Sea. All ships passing through the Øresund sound had to pay tolls and a bigger and better fortress



1. Kronborg Castle (*Kronborg Slot*)
2. Central Station; Tourist Information
3. Saint Olai's Church (*Sct. Olai Kirke*)
4. Town Hall (*Rådhus*)
5. Carmelite House/Town Museum (*Bymuseum*)
6. Saint Mariæ Church (*Sct. Mariæ Kirke*)
7. *Danserindenbønden* (Park)
8. Old Ferry Street (*Gammel Færgestræde*)
9. Casino & Hotel Marienlyst
10. Docks for Ferry to Helsingborg

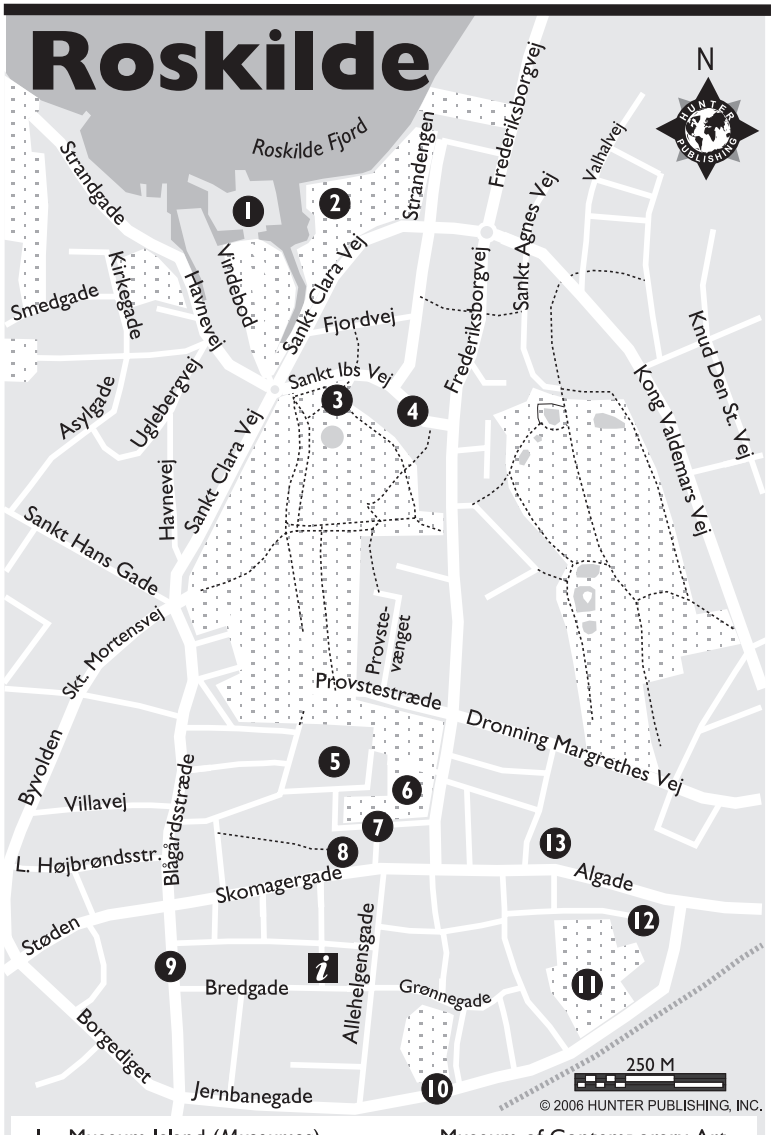
equipped with canons was needed, both to attack the ships that tried to sail through without paying and also for protection against the opposition, which mostly consisted of the Hanseatic League. The new castle was completed at the end of the 17th century by King Frederik II and named Kronborg after a castle in Belgium called Cronenburg.

The toll continued until well into the 19th century despite strong opposition from other countries. One of the most devastating attacks came in 1658 when Sweden conquered Kronborg and plundered most of the valuables inside (they were kept when the castle was returned to Denmark two years later).

Today, Kronborg is mostly known as Hamlet's castle from Shakespeare's play. Exactly why the English writer chose this castle is uncertain but one theory is that some of his actor-friends used to perform for King Fredrik II at the castle.

In the guided tours, offered in English, you will learn more about the history and about how tough it was to live here, not for the kings of course, but for the hundreds of servants and other employees who worked long hours at the castle with food and accommodation as their only payment. They still had a good life compared to all the prisoners here and walking through the dungeons in the basement is a thrilling experience on the tour.

Kronborg Castle, Helsingør, ☎ 49-213078, www.kronborg.dk, is open every day May through September from 10.30 am to 5 pm, in spring and fall Tuesday-Sunday from 11 am to 3 pm; closed December-February. Admission is 40 kr/$6.80.



1. Museum Island (*Museumsø*)
2. Viking Ship Museum (*Vikingeskibshallen*)
3. Glassworks Gallery (*Glassgalleriet*)
4. Church of Saint James (*Skt Ibs*)
5. Cathedral (*Domkirke*)
6. Roskilde Museums
7. Palace Wing, Palace Collections, Museum of Contemporary Art
8. Town Hall (*Rådhus*)
9. Old Shops
10. Central Station; *Vor Frue Kirke*
11. Grey Friars' Churchyard (*Gråbrødrekirkegård*)
12. Horse Market (*Hestetorvet*)
13. Roskilde Priory (*Kloster*)

Roskilde

Roskilde was one of the leading cities in northern Europe about 1,000 years ago. At the end of a fjord, it was a natural settlement for the Vikings and developed into one of the leading trading ports in Scandinavia at that time.

When the Viking Age ended, Roskilde became the capital of Denmark, which at the time also included large parts of southern Sweden. It also became the country's religious center when it was decided that it should be the home to the archbishop.

The town grew rapidly thanks to the influence of the Catholic Church and in the Middle Ages the population of Roskilde reached about 10,000 people, which made it one of the biggest cities in Scandinavia.

Roskilde lost all its importance in an instant following the Reformation in 1536, when Copenhagen became the administrative center for the church and, as a result, took over as capital.

Today, Roskilde is known for its university but perhaps more for the annual festival here at the end of June and beginning of July for four days.

The most famous attractions are the Roskilde Cathedral and the Viking Ship Museum.

The **Roskilde Tourist Offic**e, Gullandsstræde 15, ☎ 46-316565, www.visitroskilde.com.

❖ The Cathedral

Roskilde is one of the oldest cities in Scandinavia. The first church was built here in the 10th century when the city became one of the bishoprics of Denmark during the regime of King Harald Bluetooth. Bishop Absalon, who founded Copenhagen, began building the cathedral in 1170, though it would take well into the 13th century before it was completed. Since then, porches and chapels have been added over the years.

The characteristic spires, which can be seen from far away, were not added until the 15th century.

The Roskilde Cathedral is right in the middle of the city and can be seen from well outside the city limits thanks to its elevated location. Since it was built during several eras, various architectural styles are used.

The cathedral has been the official burial place for the royal family in Denmark since Queen Margarete I was buried here in the 15th century. Since then, an additional 28 kings and queens have been interred; the latest was Queen Ingrid in 2001.

❖ The Viking Ship Museum

The cathedral is the main reason to visit Roskilde but the Viking Ship Museum, on the shore of the fjord, is a close second. About 40 years ago, five Viking ships were found at the bottom of the Roskilde Fjord. These ships are now part of an exhibition that also includes other remnants from that era.

Besides just looking at ships you can get hands-on experience of what it was like to be part of the crew on a Viking voyage. From May 1 to September 30, such trips are arranged on the Roskilde Fjord and last for about 50 minutes. The best time to visit is in the summer, from mid-May to mid-August, when five ships depart daily.

The museum is open daily year-round, 10 am-5 pm. Admission is 75 kr/$12.75 in the summer and 45 kr/$7.65 in the winter. Guided tours in English are available in the summer at 12 noon and 3 pm. For more information, ☎ 46-300200 or visit www.vikingeskibsmuseet.dk.

> **Tip:** Those interested to find out more about the lives of the Vikings should visit the **Lejre Viking Village** a couple of km southwest of Roskilde.

❖ The Roskilde Festival

The first Roskilde Festival was held in 1971. It is now the largest music festival in northern Europe and draws crowds of up to 70,000 people from all over Europe. There are 150 bands playing on seven or eight different stages. Visitors to the festival (mostly young adults) sleep in tents on the campgrounds, which is free as long as you have a ticket to the festival. The actual festival lasts for four days and a ticket costs

1,050 kr/$178.50. The camping area is open the entire week of the festival and, if you want, you can buy the seven-day pass for 100 kr/$17 more.

For more information and booking visit www.roskilde-festival.dk.

Roskilde is only 30 minutes by car from downtown Copenhagen and there are frequent trains leaving from the central train station.

■ Bornholm

Introduction

The island of Bornholm is in many ways different from the rest of Denmark, mainly because of its remote location. Bornholm is southeast of the Swedish province of Scania and is actually closer to both Germany and Poland than any point on mainland Denmark. But the closest neighbor to Bornholm is Sweden, which the island belonged to for a short period following the Roskilde Peace Treaty in 1658 when Bornholm and the four current Swedish provinces of Scania, Halland, Blekinge and Bohuslän were handed over. All of them had belonged to Denmark for several centuries and the majority of the people weren't happy about switching sides. Had it not been for a successful uprising by the Bornholm people a few months after the treaty, the island might still belong to Sweden today. Shortly after the revolt, the island of Bornholm was returned and Denmark has had control of the island ever since, with the exception of a brief period during World War II.

Today, Bornholm has 45,000 inhabitants and one-third of those live in the city of Rønne. Farming and tourism are both important to the people of Bornholm, but fishing, particularly for herring, has been the main occupation here for ages.

Getting Here

By Boat

Most people take the ferry from Ystad in Sweden to Rønne on Bornholm, which takes an hour and 20 minutes. A round-trip ticket from Ystad to Rønne costs 220 kr/$37.40 (282 Swedish kr) in the high season.

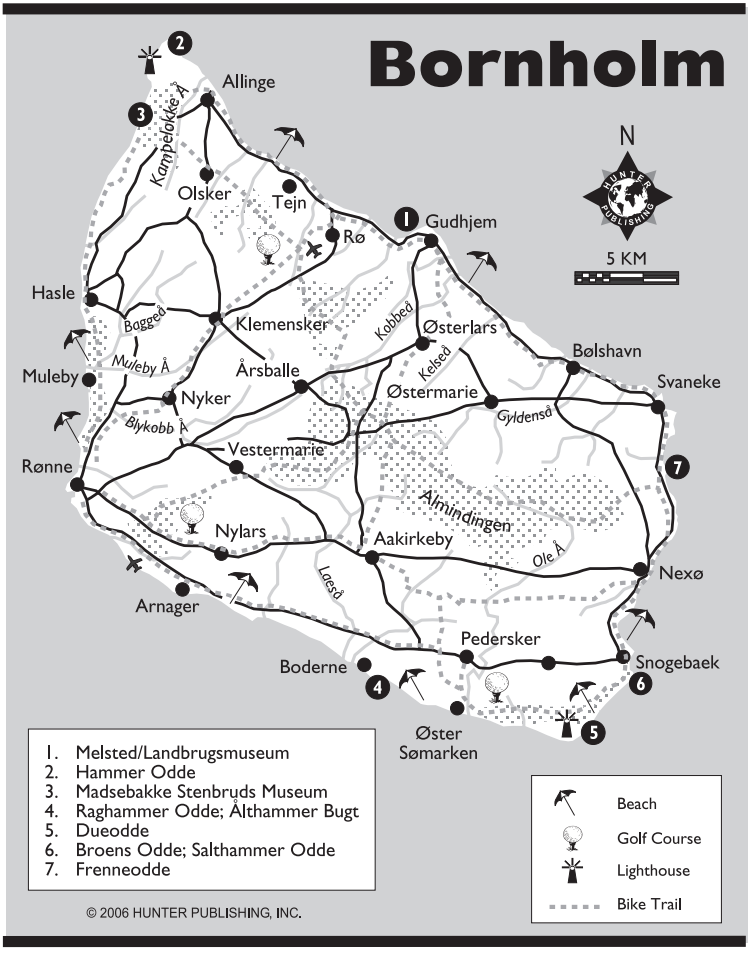
The train station in Ystad is right next to the ferry terminal and you can get there from downtown Copenhagen or the Kastrup Airport in an hour and 15 minutes. It's possible to

buy a combined ticket for the train and boat from the Danish railway company, **DSB**, ☎ 70-131415, www.dsb.dk.

You can also get to Bornholm by boat from Copenhagen and Køge on **Sealand** and from Sassnitz in Germany.

By Plane

Cimber Air, ☎ 70-101218, www.cimber.dk, is affiliated with SAS and offers flights from Copenhagen Airport in Kastrup to Rønne with several daily departures. The flying time from Copenhagen to Rønne is only 35 minutes.



Getting Around

You can bring your bike from the mainland or rent one on the island. For bike rentals, see *Adventures on Wheels*.

Cars can also be brought over from the mainland, which is quite expensive. An alternative is to rent a car on Bornholm.

Car Rentals

Avis, Snellemark 19, Rønne, ☎ 56-952208.

Europcar, Kystvejen 1, Rønne (also Rønne Airport and Gudhjem), ☎ 56-954300.

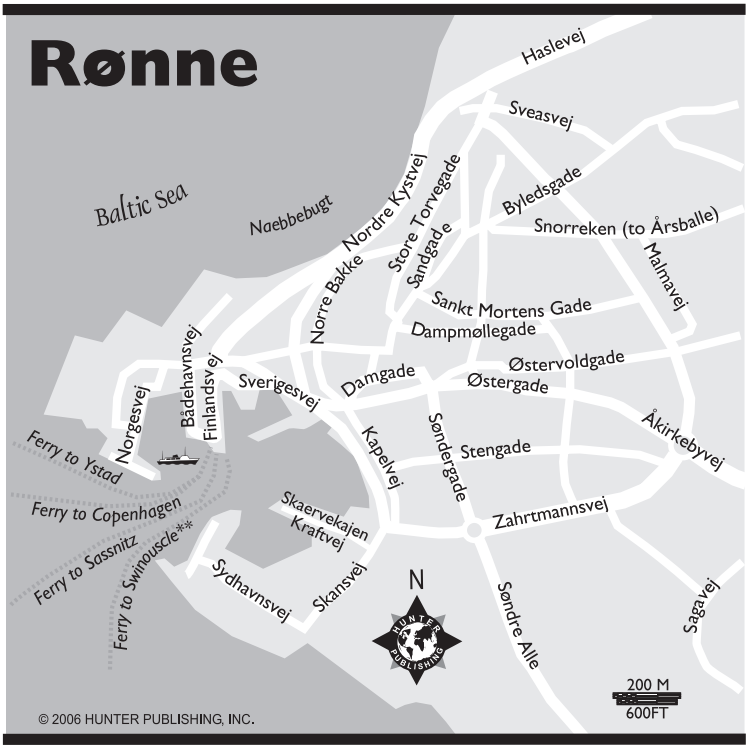
Rønne

During the Middle Ages, Rønne flourished, thanks to the lucrative herring business, and the population increased as a result. Today, it's the biggest town on the island, with 15,000 permanent residents. The main attractions in the downtown area are the cathedral and the market on the main square, which is held every Wednesday and Saturday year-round. Bornholm's airport is only a couple of km south of Rønne.

Sightseeing

The southern part of the island is quite flat and known for its long white sandy beaches. One of the best is found at **Dueodde**, the southernmost tip of Bornholm, where you can also see the highest lighthouse in Denmark (48 m/150 feet). Another good beach is called **Balka**, just north of Dueodde near the town of Nexø, which is the biggest fishing port on Bornholm. **Nexø** suffered from bombings during World War II and many of the houses were destroyed but it's still a charming place to visit. There's also a small museum of fishing by the harbor.

Farther up the coast is **Svaneke**, Bornholm's smallest town, with half-timbered houses on terraced slopes. You are now entering the northern coast of the island, which is much hillier than the south; the sandy beaches end and the landscape becomes barren.



Even hillier than Svaneke is **Gudhjem**, with streets so steep that biking (downhill) is prohibited in the whole town. Gudhjem is a really picturesque town where the yellow houses with red-tiled roofs overlook the sea from their terraced slopes. The town almost has a subtropical feel to it, with mulberries and figs growing in the gardens. This is because Bornholm has a warmer climate than other parts of northern Europe, with milder weather in the spring and autumn and lots of sunshine in the summer.

In the northernmost section of Bornholm are the twin towns of **Allinge** and **Sandvig**. Just north of the harbor in Sandvig is **Hammerhus**, the biggest castle ruin in northern Europe, and the most visited attraction on Bornholm. Hammerhus is in an elevated position and on a clear day you can see all the way over to Sweden. The walk up to the castle from Sandvig provides incredible scenery. Another walk you should take

while you're here is out to **Hammerknuden**, the northern tip of Bornholm, where you'll find an old lighthouse.

The Danish land isn't spoiled by a lot of forests and **Almindingen** (which means the Common Land) occupies a major part of central Bornholm. Besides the lush vegetation, you will find a castle, **Gamleborg**, which was used as a place of refuge during wars.

Hammerhus

The Round Churches

There are 22 churches on Bornholm, but the most interesting are the round churches, which are characteristic for this island, with their white bases and black cone-shaped rooftops. They were built in the 12th and 13th centuries all over Bornholm, primarily intended for defensive purposes. Whenever the island was attacked or under siege, people would use them to take refuge and defend their land, which they often did successfully.

There are only four round churches left on Bornholm, each with its own history. **Østerlars**, just south of Gudhjem, is the biggest and oldest, but the best-preserved is **Nylars**, just east of Rønne. The other two, **Nyker** and **Olsker**, are both on the western side of the island between Rønne and Allinge.

Most round churches are open from 9 am to 5 pm daily in the summer. Some are free to enter while others charge a small entry fee of about 10 kr/$1.70.

Adventures

On Wheels

Biking is the most popular activity on the island and there are more than 200 km (125 miles) of trails to choose from. Bornholm used to have a railroad and many of the trails are where the old railroad tracks used to be, for example between Rønne and Nexø.

❖ Bike Rentals

Bornholms Cykeludlejning, Rønne, ☎ 56-951359.

Cykelcentret Rønne, ☎ 56-950604

In addition to these two in Rønne, you'll find a bike rental place in virtually every town on Bornholm. Expect to pay 50-75 kr/$8.50-12.75 per day to rent a bike but discounts are available if you rent long-term.

Places to Stay

Hotel Klippen, Grevens Dal 50, Gudhjem, ☎ 56-485415, $$$. In beautiful surroundings with great views of Gudhjem and the Baltic Sea.

Hotel Sandkaas, Tejnvej 68, Allinge, ☎ 56480895, www.hotelsandkaas.dk, $$-$$$. About three km (1.8 miles) from the town of Allinge in the north of Bornholm. Choose between a cabin and an apartment.

Svaneke Hostel, Reberbanevej 9, Svaneke, ☎ 56-496242, $. In the southern part of Svaneke; close to both beach and forest.

Places to Eat

Smoked herring is a specialty on the island. Try it with a piece of rye bread and egg yolk at one of the smokehouses; that's how the locals eat it. In the heyday of smoked herring on Bornholm, about 100 years ago, they had smokehouses all over the island. Today, there are only about 15 left. You will find some in Hasle, Nexø, Gudhjem, Allinge and Svaneke.

Restaurant Fyrtøjet, St. Torvegade 22, Rønne, ☎ 56-953012, $$-$$$. Good fish restaurant in downtown Rønne with much more than just smoked herring.

Restaurant Brøddan, Brøddegade 20, Gudhjem, ☎ 56-485022, $$-$$$. Restaurant with an extensive menu in the picturesque town of Gudhjem.

Ostehjørnet Café, Østergade 40, Rønne, ☎ 56-950599, $-$$.

Excursions

Christiansø is a small island northeast of Bornholm, about an hour away by boat. The island, which is part of an archipelago owned by the Danish Ministry of Defense, is half a square mile in size but, thanks to the old fortress with its impressive towers, walls and bastions, you can easily spend a whole day there without getting bored.

There are several daily departures in the summer from Allinge, Gudhjem and Svaneke on Bornholm's east coast. For more information and bookings, contact **Christiansøfarten**, ☎ 56-485176.

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